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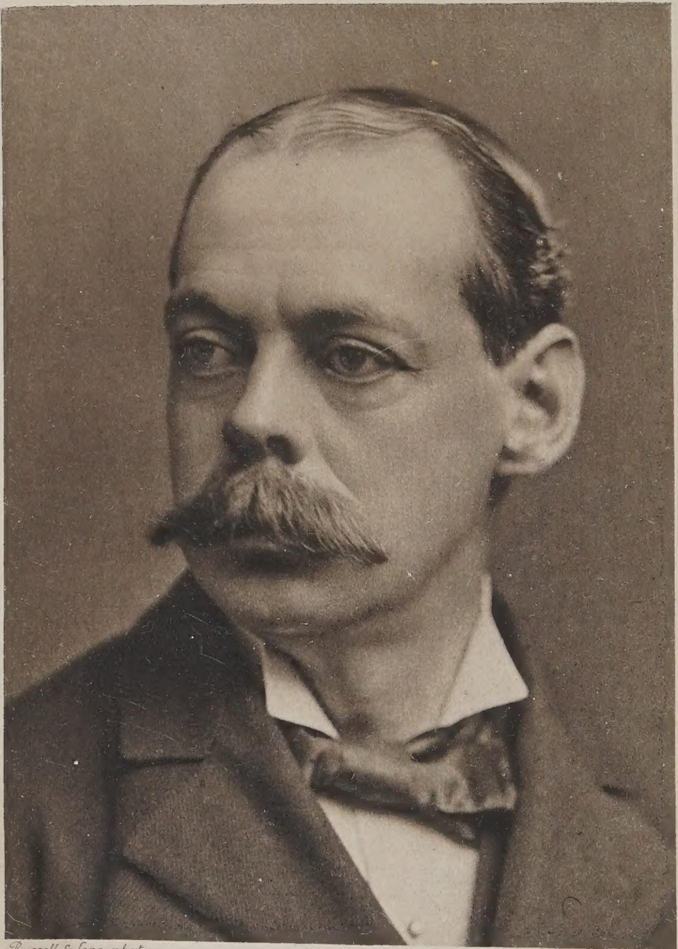
LORD
RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

VOL. II



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Lord Randolph Churchill,
1886.

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LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

BY

WINSTON SPENCER CHURCHILL, M.P.

AUTHOR OF
'THE STORY OF THE MALAKAND FIELD FORCE, 1897'
'THE RIVER WAR' 'LONDON TO LADYSMITH VIA PRETORIA' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II

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CHAPTER XII

THE TWENTY-SIXTH OF JANUARY

> 'When it was said that the noble lord, the member for Paddington, had not declared a policy, he pointed, and he was justified in pointing, not to a sentence, nor even to a phrase, but to a date, and he said, "Our policy is the 26th of January."'—*Speech of Mr. Gladstone, Second Reading Government of Ireland Bill, May* 10, 1886.

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According to Mr. Morley, the month that followed the General Election was passed by Mr. Gladstone 'in depth of meditation.' The questions which he revolved were vast and grave. Important and even vital factors in their decision were hid from him. He saw that the Liberal party was ripe for schism. He faced the united demand of Nationalist Ireland. He knew that the balance of power was held by Mr. Parnell. But he could not know whether the Government would meet Parliament or not; whether they wanted to be dismissed or not; whether they would seek to gain Whig and Liberal support, or would try to preserve the combination which had placed them in power; nor what, in the last alternative, was the Irish policy Ministers would be prepared to offer or parties disposed to accept. Yet time was short and the country waited tip-toe on his deliberations.

The suspense was not prolonged. The results of the elections could not be estimated till after November 30 and were not determined until another week had passed. But on December 17, after ten days of whisperings and rumour, a public announcement of his Home Rule scheme, apparently authentic in character and circumstantial in detail, appeared simultaneously in Liberal and Conservative papers. Mr. Gladstone was prompt to repudiate, as a mere 'speculation' upon his opinions, this premature and unfortunate disclosure. But the next day he was writing to Lord Hartington who had asked for explanations, a frank and full account of his 'opinions and ideas,' which shows how closely newspaper assertion corresponded with the workings of his mind. The process by which his conversion was effected, has been at length laid bare. His internal loathing of the Coercive measures he had been forced to impose during the past five years; his suspicion and entire misconception of the cold-blooded manœuvres by which his Government had been overturned; his hope of repairing, remoulding and consolidating the great party instrument which he had directed so long; the desire of an 'old Parliamentary hand' to win the game; the dream of a sun-lit Ireland, loyal because it was free, prosperous and privileged because it was loyal—the crowning glory of an old man's life—all find their place in that immense decision. And then the whole mass of resolve, ponderously advancing, drawing into its movement all that learning and fancy could supply, gathering in its progress the growing momentum of enthusiasm, wrenching and razing all barriers from its path, was finally precipitated like an avalanche upon a startled world! All has been set forth. What communications Mr. Gladstone made to his colleagues; how he addressed himself to Lord Granville, to Lord Spencer, to Lord Hartington, to Mr. Chamberlain; and how he was variously met, have now become matters of published fact. An authoritative analysis of the workings of his mind has been published and may be checked or extended by a score of conversations, letters and chance remarks, all carefully recorded. Judgment may be formed of the part he played, upon evidence perhaps more full and accurate than attaches to any similar transaction. But a veil of mystery and even suspicion still hangs over the inner councils of Lord Salisbury's Government. What were the leaders of the Conservative party thinking about during these anxious weeks? What plans did they revolve, what difficulties did they face within the secrecy of the Cabinet? Their final decision was declared on January 26. But what alternatives were they weighing meanwhile in conclave or consultation? How far were they prepared to go in satisfaction of Irish demands? What purpose lay behind Lord Randolph Churchill's silence at Sheffield or lurked in Lord Carnarvon's 'empty house'? Upon these much-disputed matters it may now be possible to cast some light.

Lord Randolph's view of the policy which the Conservative party should pursue in Irish matters is described with the utmost candour in a letter

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which he had written to a friend of mark *before* the result of the General Election was known:—

> *Private.* 2 Connaught Place, W.: October 14, 1885.
>
> I have no objection to Sexton and Healy knowing the deliberate intention of the Government on the subject of Irish Education; but it would not do for the letter or the communication to be made public, for the effect of publicity on Lancashire might be unfortunate and might cripple the good intentions of Her Majesty's Government.
>
> . . . It is the Bishops entirely to whom I look in the future to turn, to mitigate or to postpone the Home Rule onslaught. Let us only be enabled to occupy a year with the Education Question. By that time, I am certain, Parnell's party will have become seriously disintegrated. Personal jealousies, Government influences, Davitt and Fenian intrigues will all be at work on the devoted band of eighty; and the Bishops, who in their hearts hate Parnell and don't care a scrap for Home Rule, having safely acquired control of Irish education, will, according to my calculation, complete the rout.
>
> That is my policy, and I know that it is sound and good, and the only possible Tory policy. It hinges on acquiring the confidence and friendship of the Bishops; but if you go in for their mortal foes the Jesuits on the one hand, and their mortal foes the anti-clerical Nationalists on the other, for the purpose of humiliating and beating back Archbishop Walsh and his colleagues, this policy will be shattered. . . . My own opinion is that if you approach the Archbishop through proper channels, if you deal in friendly remonstrances and in attractive assurances, . . . the tremendous force of the Catholic Church will gradually and insensibly come over to the side of the Tory party.

Lord Randolph furthermore openly avowed and defended his Irish policy during these months—in its general scope—on March 4, 1886, in the House of

Commons *after* the election and after the accession to power of Mr. Gladstone's Home Rule Government. 'I am not going to deny,' he said, 'that at one time I had an idea that the Tory party might co-operate with the Irish party. I have often worked with Irish members. I hope to be able to do so again. I have never concealed in the last Parliament that I thought it possible that on many Irish subjects the Tory party might co-operate with the Irish National party. . . . . It always appeared to me that the Tory party were well qualified to deal with many questions of Irish interest in a manner agreeable to the Irish people and not in the least dangerous to the general welfare of the British Empire. I particularly allude to the question of education and to the question of the land. Judging by past history, I imagined that the cry of Repeal might be raised as strongly as ever and that Irish members might say again: "Live or die, sink or swim, we go for Repeal." Still, I imagined that might merely turn out to be a sentiment for keeping together a powerful political party; and that, if Repeal were shown to be absolutely against the will of the Imperial Parliament, the policy of Repeal would be dropped.' Whatever may be thought of the merits of such a policy, there is nothing disingenuous or obscure either in its private handling or its public declaration.

Lord Randolph's Irish opinions were not altered by the verdict of the constituencies. His natural delight at the Tory victories in the boroughs led him to form a more sanguine estimate of the mood of the

1885 counties than the event sustained. But even his Æt. 36 highest anticipations did not place the number of Conservative members at more than 300; and his mind turned at once towards a Whig coalition:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

2 Connaught Place, W.: November 29, 1885.

Dear Lord Salisbury,— . . . If we have any luck this week we ought to number 300 in the House.

I saw Sir Erskine May yesterday—very grumpy. He said the first trial of strength would be a vote of want of confidence. I said that did not follow; that the first trial of strength in a new Parliament often took place on the election of a Speaker. He said: 'What, oppose Mr. Peel!' I intimated that, though we were very fond of Peel, he had no prescriptive possession of the Chair, and that his election would require something in the nature of a *quid pro quo*. I also gave him to understand that we have quarrelled with the Irish, and, having put these and various other false ideas into his head, left him in a state of exasperated perplexity.

I hope you may be a little in town next week, for the future seems to require the most careful consideration before any policy is submitted to the collective luminosity of the Cabinet. I think you ought to negotiate with the other side, giving Hartington India, Goschen Home Office and Rosebery Scotch Office. You will never get Whig support as long as I am in the Government, and Whig support you must have. I should like to contribute effectively to your getting it, for my curiosity as to the internal and mysterious mechanism of Government is completely satiated. Very indifferent health makes me look forward irresistibly to idleness regained. If you wanted another bait for the Whigs, ——'s elevation to the Lords might supply it, for I hear on the very best authority that chaos and the —— Office are at present indistinguishable. I believe that by some process of this kind you could institute a Government which would keep the Parnellites and Radicals at bay for years; and, after all, that is what must be arrived at. 1885 Æt. 36

Yours most sincerely,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

Lord Salisbury's answer reads strangely in the light of after-events:—

November 30, 1885.

My dear Randolph,—I am afraid your patriotic offer of giving place to Goschen for the sake of making a coalition will be of little avail. They hate me as much as they hate you—and if retirements are required for the sake of repose and Whig combinations I shall claim to retire with you in both respects.

The time for a coalition has not come yet—nor will, so long as the G.O.M. is to the fore. But I don't expect we shall be long in office this time. I must try and see you some time this week about our future measures. Are you staying in town? I have not yet had time to read your Burma papers, but will send them you back, with any comments that occur to me, when I have.

Yours very truly,
SALISBURY.

Lord Randolph, however, held tenaciously to the idea of a coalition. The fact that the accession of Lord Hartington to the leadership of the House would block his own path effectively and that the acceptance of office by important Whig Ministers must diminish his personal influence, does not seem to have affected this self-seeking and unscrupulous man; and about December 4 or 5 he sent the Prime Minister a formal and elaborate account of

1885 his views, which is for many reasons worthy of

ÆT. 36 attention:—

MEMORANDUM.[1]

Assume that the supporters of the Government will number 300.

Under ordinary circumstances Government would probably resign at once, there being a clear majority of seventy against them. The 370 opponents of the Government are so singularly disunited that there is no reason to suppose the Government need be placed in a minority, and there is every reason to suppose that no other Government could command so large a following as the present Government.

CONSTITUTION OF THE 370 OPPONENTS.

It is almost certain that there are in this number some twenty-five members who without doing any violence to their political principles would habitually support the Government. It may be reckoned that 200 will follow the lead of Lord Hartington as long as he remains leader of the Liberal Opposition. The party more immediately under the control of Messrs. Chamberlain, Dilke, Morley and Labouchere may be estimated at sixty-five votes. There remain eighty Nationalists under the leadership of Mr. Parnell.

It is certain that no Vote of Censure or of Want of Confidence will be moved at the assembling of Parliament because—

1. Neither Mr. Gladstone, nor Lord Hartington, nor Mr. Chamberlain could form a Government.

2. Without the support of the eighty Nationalists a Vote, of Censure or otherwise, would be heavily defeated.

[1] This was written ten days ago. Its contents are not much affected by recent events.—R. H. S. C.*

---

* The Memorandum and Lord Randolph's footnote are both undated, but Lord Salisbury's reply on the 9th shows that he had waited some days before replying. I conclude therefore that November 26 or 27 would be the latest date at which this document was written.

3. The support of the Nationalists would demand a heavier price than any large portion of the Liberal party would be prepared to pay. 1885 ÆT. 36

On what occasion can a trial of party strength arise?

1. On the election of Speaker.

2. On the question of Parliamentary Oath.

SPEAKERSHIP.

The Irish are hostile to Mr. Peel.

The Whigs equally strong in his favour. The Government can displace Mr. Peel with the help of the Irish. The Whigs will be bitterly alienated. On the other hand, the Government can support Mr. Peel and carry his election. The Irish will find their revenge in voting for Mr. Bradlaugh. The triumph of Mr. Bradlaugh would be a shaking blow to the Tory Government and party. The alienation of the Whigs by the defeat of Mr. Peel would certainly in the course of a few weeks or months destroy the Government.

Which course to choose?

Seeing that the Irish support can never be other than momentary, seeing that by no possibility can [that] support be clothed with any elements of stability, seeing that the alienation of the Whigs from the Government must lead to great evils, seeing that Whig support, if attained, is honourable, stable, and natural, in my own mind I pronounce for the re-election of Mr. Peel and for running the risk of the triumph for Mr. Bradlaugh.

We have proceeded thus far.

The Whigs will not be displeased by the election of Mr. Peel. The Whigs will not be indignant at the seating of Mr. Bradlaugh. Is it possible to convert this negative frame of mind of non-hostility into one of positive co-operation?

Three methods suggest themselves.

1. The offer of places in the Government.

2. The production of a large, genuine and liberal programme.

3. After such a programme has been produced and

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proceeded with satisfactorily, the renewal of the offer of places in the Government.

I think that all these three methods should be honestly tried in their order. The first must be done with liberality. The leading members of the Whig party who should be offered places in the Government are Lord Hartington (with the lead of the House of Commons), Mr. Goschen, Lord Rosebery and Sir Henry James.

I do not imagine that these offers would be now accepted. Nevertheless the fact that they have been honestly made may before long be a powerful weapon in the hands of Lord Salisbury, either as influencing his own party or the public. The making of these offers in a generous spirit cannot possibly do harm.

II. THE PROGRAMME.

On foreign questions there does not at present appear to be any difference of opinion, nor on colonial questions. Attention may be concentrated on domestic questions. I suggest that the programme should include:

1. Parliamentary Procedure	Executive.
2. Departmental Reform	
3. Indian Inquiries. (H. of C. Committee)	
4. Education Inquiries. (Royal Commission)	
5. Local Government	Legislative.
6. Land Laws	
7. University (Ireland) Education	
8. Codification of Criminal Law	

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE.

The following measures might be informally submitted to the leaders of parties in the House of Commons:—

A. The Resort to Autumn Sessions.—The session at present is too long and too short—too long for a consecutive session; too short for the decent and efficient transaction of executive, financial and legislative business.

If this is granted, the following reform suggests itself:—

That Parliament should meet not later than the first week in February, and, with the usual Easter and Whitsuntide holidays, should continue in session not later than the first week in August. That an adjournment should then take place to a period not later than the second week in October, and that the annual session should formally be brought to an end by prorogation not later than the first week in December.

B. The Alteration of Hours of Business.—That the House should meet four days in the week at 1 P.M., adjourn from 7 P.M., and rise at midnight.

C. Clôture.—That, in addition to existing regulations, it shall be within the right of the Minister to demand a division on the subject under discussion a quarter of an hour before the adjournment of or rising of the House.

D. Questions.—That the Speaker should appoint a Committee of three, not being Privy Councillors, who shall decide what questions can be answered in the House, and which in the votes; and that no question shall be put without notice, other than explanatory questions, except by the leave of the House on the demand of 100 members.

E. Adjournment, Motion for.—That the existing rule be altered, substituting the number 100 members for the present number 40.

F. That Grand Committees deal with the report stage of any Bill referred, as well as with Committee stage; and that all Bills be referred to Grand Committees after second reading.

G. That the bulk of private business relating to local development and local enterprise be transferred to local boards whose proceedings must be sanctioned by provisional orders.

Departmental Reform.—That Committees of the House of Commons be appointed to examine and report upon the constitution, staff, work performed, comparative cost of all public departments, with a view to the effecting of economies and the rearrangement of salaries, promotions and retirements.

Indian Inquiry.—This has been agreed upon.

Elementary Education Inquiry.—This requires no further notice.

LEGISLATIVE.

Local Government.—Two essentials: (1) purely popular election by ratepayers; (2) large and liberal measure of executive and local legislative powers. Workhouse management need not be touched, nor education arrangements. But all Quarter Sessions business, all sanitary matters, registration of votes, survey of land and registration of titles should be among the duties of the local boards. Also powers might be given, as in Ireland, to local boards to advance money on security of rates for purchasers of small holdings and allotments.

LAND LAWS, REFORM OF.

1. Abolition of primogeniture in cases of intestacy.
2. Compulsory registration of title.
3. Enfranchisement of future leaseholds.
4. Enfranchisement of copyholders.
5. Enfranchisement of lands held in mortmain.

UNIVERSITY (IRELAND) EDUCATION.

This should take the form of—

1. The transference of Cork College to a Catholic board of management.
2. The endowment of the Catholic University College in Dublin.
3. The establishment of a Catholic College in Armagh.
4. The transference of the Belfast College to a Presbyterian board of management.

CODIFICATION OF AND REFORM OF CRIMINAL LAW.

This can never be attained if it is left to the action of Parliament entirely. The procedure suggested is :—

1. The proposing and carrying of certain general resolutions through both Houses.
2. The appointment by statute of jurisconsults with full power under aforesaid resolutions to codify; and
3. That the code as drawn shall, after lying on the table of either House for six months, become the criminal code of the United Kingdom.

This, as above, is my second method for attracting Parliamentary support from the ranks of the nominal Opposition. Should this programme, or one more or less closely analogous to it, be introduced, generously received by the bulk of the Whigs and honestly supported, a further offer of places in the Government might with advantage be made.

'The success of foregoing,' concluded Lord Randolph, 'turns upon Ireland. I assume two facts: 1885 ÆT. 36

'1. That Coercion is impossible now.

'2. That anything in the nature of an Irish Parliament is impossible always.

'*Similarity* of treatment between England and Ireland in respect of Local Government:

'*Liberality* of grants from Treasury towards Irish objects:

'*Concession* to the Roman Catholic hierarchy on education questions:

These are the main lines of a policy towards Ireland which will secure a great amount of Parliamentary and public concurrence and will, if vigorously and boldly followed, bring about inevitably the disintegration of Mr. Parnell's party. The great size of this party is its chief danger. Its members are open to various influences—jealousy of each other and of Parnell; want of funds; Ministerial influences, priestly influences; and last, but not least, the capricious, unstable and to some extent treacherous character of the Irish nature. If that party is boldly dealt with at the outset it will soon dissolve. I do not consider that the cry for an Irish Parliament now need be more dangerous than was the cry for Repeal in the days of O'Connell. As that latter danger altogether disappeared, so may this present danger if the Government is strong in Parliament, undivided in council and unwavering in action.

'I wish to express my firm conviction and belief that if the general spirit of this Memorandum could

1885 be acted up to, the Queen's Government might well
Æt. 36 be carried on with dignity and efficiency, and the Parliament will have every reasonable chance of running a normal course and of being the means of benefit to the people.'

Lord Salisbury did not answer until the 9th :—

Private. Foreign Office: December 9, 1885.

My dear Randolph,—Lord Melbourne used to say that if you only would let a letter alone, it would answer itself. Your very interesting memorandum is not quite in that condition: but some important parts of it have been answered by events. After Hartington's speech of Saturday, there can be no longer any question of offering office *just yet* to the Moderate Liberals; and, therefore, no question of your or my resigning to facilitate that operation. He evidently said what he did to prevent his friends from suspecting him of any intention, under any circumstances, to join us. His resolves are not eternal, but he has effectually debarred himself from any such course until some little time has passed or something new has happened. Then, again, I don't think the Irish will expect us to upset the Speaker; but, if they did, I quite agree with you in thinking that it would be poor policy to do so.

But we shall have to make a Queen's Speech—at least, I can hardly imagine the Cabinet resolving on an immediate resignation. It would be deliberately excusing the other side from the necessity of showing their hand.

In making this Queen's Speech I entirely agree that our leaning must be to the Moderate Liberals, and that we can have nothing to do with any advances towards the Home Rulers. The latter course would be contrary to our convictions and our pledges, and would be quite fatal to the cohesion of our party.

But in leaning towards the Moderate Liberals we should

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take note of the fact that the moment for bargaining with them has not yet come. Whenever it does come, two results will follow: (1) Our own people will recognise the political necessity of admitting a somewhat stronger ingredient of Liberal policy into our measures, and (2) the Moderate Liberals will require some such concession as a condition of their joining us and as a proof to their own friends that they have not been guilty of any *apostasy* in so doing. That being so, the extra tinge of Liberalism in our policy will be part of the bargain when it comes, and must not be given away before that time comes. If we are too free with our cash now, we shall have no money to go to market with when the market is open.

In this view I should offer one or two suggestions in revisal of your programme. The abolition of primogeniture is in itself of no importance except on strategic grounds—it is not worth the trouble of resistance. But it is a bit of a flag. The concession would be distasteful to a certain number of our people now, and it might be acceptable as a wedding-present to the Moderate Liberals whenever the Conservative party leads them to the altar. I would not proffer it, therefore, now; though, if carried against us, I should make no serious fight over it.

The proposition of Leasehold Enfranchisement in the future requires more thrashing out. I doubt whether it would effect your object, which is that more occupiers should be owners of the houses they inhabit. I quite agree in the object. I should be more disposed to follow the Irish precedent and give local authorities the power of advancing (on the security of the tenement) some large fraction of its value at low interest, limiting the advance to cases where the occupier was owner of the whole lease—and, of course, confining it to voluntary purchase. This for existing leaseholds. For future buildings the most effective plan would be to allow exemption from the rates and house tax for five years in all cases where the occupier was also the owner. (3) With respect to Local Government, I admit

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that a general ratepaying franchise may be difficult to avoid; and, on the whole, I think the Local Government Bill should be mentioned in the Queen's Speech. But I should mention in the same sentence, and as part of the same subject, a London Local Government Bill, which might be drawn in a very popular manner. The multiplication of municipalities—say eight or nine—would please the local leaders, who hope to figure in them and become Mayors. I should introduce this before the big Local Government Bill. If we are turned out, we shall be able to fight the question better for not having shown our hand.

I should be disposed—subject to counsel—to introduce a Church Reform Bill giving an easy method for getting rid of criminous clergy, and perhaps also of incompetent clergy; but that craves wary walking. Then a Bill for making the sale of all corporate land easy; a Bill to enable marriages to take place in Dissenting chapels without the presence of the Registrar; and, perhaps, a Bill for dealing with the Scotch marriage law, but that is doubtful. With respect to the other articles of your programme—such as Parliamentary Procedure, Criminal Code and Roman Catholic Education—I need say nothing, because I generally agree with you. I have inflicted on you an abominably long letter, but I thought it better to put my thoughts before you. . . .

Lord Randolph replied:—

India Office: December 9, 1885.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—It will be a great pleasure to me to wait upon you to-morrow afternoon at three o'clock at the Foreign Office.

It is very kind of you writing to me at such length; but as this will require no answer, other than what you may give in conversation to-morrow, I venture a few additional observations.

As to offer of places to Whigs.

I can imagine a crisis supervening, to deal with which might require heroic measures and a great appeal to your followers in both Houses of Parliament for confidence and support. Under such circumstances the fact of the offer having been made and sulkily or arrogantly refused would be of great moral value to you. A proper recognition of two leading features of the situation seems to me almost to compel you to make an attempt *now* at such a negotiation, even though you may be certain that it will fail:—

1. The fact that your Government is in a minority in the House of Commons.

2. The division in the Opposition, so glaringly and so recently shown by Mr. Chamberlain's speech at Leicester and Lord Hartington's in Derbyshire.

I submit with great deference that, your task being to carry on the Queen's Government, it is incumbent upon you to take advantage of every apparent circumstance which may be made to contribute to the efficiency and solidity of the Government; nor ought you, under such grave conditions as now exist, to shrink unduly from any reasonable sacrifice of friends or colleagues which might enable you honourably to attain the end in view. Having put your hand to the plough under the uninviting conditions of June last, it is hardly possible to look back, or to act as if the responsibility for Government was not upon you.

It is very pleasant to me to learn that my suggestions with regard to Parliamentary Procedure, R.C. University Ireland, Education, and criminal law reform and codification meet with your general concurrence; and that being so, I allow myself to risk a few arguments which seem to me to militate somewhat against the views expressed in your letter on the question of the programme generally, and in particular the questions of Local Government and Land Law reform.

If I apprehended your meaning rightly, you would make your programme rather rigidly orthodox Tory, with a view of expanding it into Whig heresy when the time for a fusion

1885 — ÆT. 36 should seem to have arrived. Now I hold very strongly that in that case the moment for a fusion will never arrive. If the Newport programme is not at once presented to Parliament in a large and generous measure, the Whigs will be justified in their contention that it did not signify real progressive legislation—that they were right and discriminating when they mocked at it. That has been Lord Hartington's cry all along, which he reiterated with emphasis last Saturday. The difference between the Newport programme and the concrete portions of the Midlothian address was not easy to be distinguished, and I doubt its existence. That being so, if you produce the former, without timidity, skimping, paring or scraping, and if the Whigs turn you out, obviously their motive is office, and office only. The country will not be deceived or edified by such purely party manœuvres. And as by your administrative record, so with your legislative programme, you will have laid up for yourself treasure in the constituencies, you will have cast bread upon the waters which you will find after many days.

This is indubitably the lesson of 1835.

I do urge as strongly as I may that you should decide in your mind how far you can go in legislation—not under Whig pressure, not with a view solely of gaining Whigs, but solely with a view of what appears to be best for the country without infringement of any great Tory principle; and that, having so decided, you should offer the result to Parliament without delay, without stint, without qualification and with all confidence. It is, I am convinced, by 'showing your hand,' by showing how many good trumps you have in it, that you will gain support—if not immediate, at any rate in the near future. It is by hiding your hand—by giving cause for the belief, or ground for the accusation, that it is a poor hand and that you have no trumps, that you will lose support now and make it most difficult to gain later. The boroughs have gone for you so strongly because they believe in the fulness and genuineness of the Newport programme. Our task should be to keep the boroughs, as well as to win the counties; this can only be done by an active progressive—I risk the word, a democratic—policy, a casting-off and a burning of those old, worn-out aristocratic and class garments from which the Derby-Dizzy lot, with their following of county families, could never, or never cared to, extricate themselves.

This being so, in my mind, I find the suggested postponement of rural Local Government a course open to the deepest suspicion; the preference given to London government an error in tactics of the largest kind. No one in the country, or in London either, cares a damn about a London municipality, nor would many municipalities attract them. But county government, involving as it does a redistribution and relief of burdens, to which every man of our party is deeply pledged, is without doubt anxiously expected by the constituencies, and will not brook delay. So I would say about land law reform. I am very sure that the feeling of the boroughs is in favour of extensive changes in our land system, on the ground that the labour in the towns is depreciated by agricultural migration, and that this latter is the effect of an antiquated land system. This, rightly or wrongly, is the notion in the manufacturing minds, and failure on our part to come up to their legitimate and reasonable expectations would produce incalculable disappointment and mortification.

If you decide that the large constructive measures which the times seem to demand are beyond the capacity of the Tory party, or the scope of their political principles, though I should regret the decision I would accept it without demur. But in that case I would press upon you the advisability of prompt resignation, on the ground that the country had for the time decided that the function of the Tory party would be more usefully displayed in Opposition, in efforts purely critical, in attempts to amend Liberal legislation and moderate Liberal zeal. If you show your hand at all, show it fully and show a good one; but if you have no hand good enough for the game or the stakes,

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place the cards face downwards on the table, decline to play and leave the Downing Street table. I cannot think there is any safe *via media* between these two courses.

Lastly, I will not conceal my repugnance to dealing with Church reform. Surely the Russell-Gurney-Disraeli Church legislation is a warning. The time of Parliament will be wasted in furious ecclesiastical differences, and votes will be lost on every side by the party responsible for the effort. The Public Worship Regulation Act was one of my first House of Commons experiences, and I cannot forget it. The Nonconformists, so powerful, will offer every opposition ; and nothing will be gained except loss of time, of temper and of strength. If those ornamental but, on the whole, rather useless and expensive Lords Spiritual care to justify their privileges by attempts at legislation, smile on them, beam on them, give them every encouragement for bringing the Lords Temporal into a devout and heavenly frame of mind. Some good may possibly issue from such a source, if such should be the will of Providence. But Church reform which is the product of a Cabinet checked and controlled by party Whips and guided by House of Commons lobbies is surely in its nature a monstrosity, possibly a profanity, certainly a farce.

Please pardon me this long letter. I feel that my constant and lengthy epistolary communications to you may lead you to look forward to resignation of office as an immense relief, but I find my excuse in your kindness hitherto, and am

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Ireland swiftly overclouded all other projects and puzzles which Ministers might consider. It was late in July that Lord Carnarvon had met Parnell. Four anxious months had passed and the Viceroy had now arrived at definite conclusions.

He saw with alarm that the National League was strengthening and expanding every day. The fall in prices had affected the payment of rents. Serious social and economic discontents stimulated the increasing political excitement. Boycottings were flagrant, pitiless and widespread. Alike by his convictions and his public pledges he felt himself debarred from asking for special legislation. Another policy forced itself upon him with crushing weight. He declared that unless the Cabinet could move in the direction of Home Rule he could not continue their servant. It became a question for the Cabinet whether the retirement of Lord Carnarvon on the grounds stated would be so heavy a blow to the Government and so injurious to their main political position that, if he persisted, it would be better for the Government to resign in a body, ostensibly as a consequence of the election. Lord Salisbury desired his principal colleagues to express their opinion upon Lord Carnarvon's views and intentions.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

December 10, 1885.

Dear Lord S.,—I return you Lord Carnarvon's memorandum, which was carefully considered by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Smith and myself.

We came to the conclusion that if the Lord-Lieutenant insists on the choice being made between the adoption of his policy and resignation, the latter course becomes compulsory on us. If we go out merely on the ground of our Parliamentary position, we remain for the purposes of opposition to Home Rule, as a party, *totus teres atque rotundus*; but if that blessed man sets the signal for concession flying, our

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party will go to pieces, as it did on the Irish Land Act. The only hope for the country is to keep this present Tory party well together; and unfortunately Lord Carnarvon has it once more in his power, as on two former occasions, to disintegrate, demoralise and shatter.

However, I wish to say for myself—and I feel pretty certain it will be the view of Sir M. Hicks-Beach and Mr. Smith—that, whatever course you may finally decide upon, I will gladly see it through to the best of my ability, no matter what may be the result.

Yours most sincerely,
R. S. C.

But Lord Salisbury preferred to face the consequences of the Carnarvon resignation, whatever they might be. 'The fact,' he wrote (December 11), 'that Gladstone is mad to take office, will force him into some line of conduct which will be discreditable to him, and disastrous, if we do not prematurely gratify his hunger. The Carnarvon incident is vexatious. I hope he will be induced to stay with us till Parliament meets. But even if he does not, I doubt if his retirement will produce any very serious confusion. He will nominally retire on the ground of health or some private reason. The truth may ooze out. But we shall not mend matters by all retiring with him. The true reason will equally ooze out; and we shall have proclaimed our own impotence very loudly.'

The Irish situation oppressed all minds and from every quarter doubt and foreboding streamed in upon the Conservative leaders. Was it possible in face of Mr. Parnell and his United Ireland, in face of

Mr. Gladstone and his ponderous meditations, in face of Lord Carnarvon and his open sympathies, to remain utterly unyielding? Would it not be well to make terms while time remained? Could not a joint conference of parties arrive at some compromise in regard to Irish government? And if not, how could the land be ruled? Everywhere during this month of December the sands were shifting underneath men's feet. Few were firm. Lord Randolph Churchill was a rock.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Chief Justice Morris.

Very Confidential. December 7, 1885.

My dear Chief Justice,—I am very grateful to you for your letter, which I have sent on to Lord Salisbury for his consideration.

In a memorandum on the situation which I submitted to the Prime Minister a week ago, I laid down as an axiom that with regard to any policy towards Ireland in the nature of, or containing an Irish Parliament, the attitude of the Tory Party could only be an absolutely 'non possumus' one. You suggest a Committee of leading men on both sides to inquire, and you base the suggestion on the proceedings which took place with regard to the Reform Bill.

Two objections seem to me to arise.

1. With regard to Irish Government the Ministers cannot yet with honour or even decency shift the responsibility from off their shoulders on to Parliament. In so great a matter surely Ministers must take the lead and state their policy or abdicate.

2. The precedent of the proceedings on the Reform Bill does not yet, it seems to me, apply at all closely. Those proceedings were taken to extricate Government, Opposition and Parliament generally from a deadlock and to avert a

1885 Æt. 36 great constitutional crisis. In this matter of Irish Government neither deadlock nor crisis has yet arisen. In the event of their arising, the co-operation of parties may well be resorted to, but this machinery would, I think, be spoilt by premature recourse to it.

This may happen: Mr. Gladstone may persuade his colleagues and party to a policy which Parnell might think too good to refuse absolutely. The policy might be embodied in an amendment to the Address and carried against the Government by a large majority. What should be the course of Government under such circumstances?

To resign or to dissolve?

I should be strongly in favour of the latter if Royal sanction could be obtained. If the Government resign, Gladstone succeeds in forming an Administration and carrying a Bill through the Commons by great majorities. Then will crop up again the eternal question of resistance of the House of Lords to the will of the people, and an appeal to the people on that ground will cause the essential question of Repeal or no Repeal to be obscured or perhaps altogether lost sight of. By dissolution, a clear issue is presented to English and Scotch constituencies, and the House of Lords is kept out of the battle.

Then there is no reason, it is true, why the agricultural labourers, revolving many things in their anxious minds, should not gladly agree to Repeal in order to obtain three acres and a cow, and therefore no great change in the state of parties might result, and the Tories would be definitely and decisively beaten on a distinct issue. Well, what then? We should have fought our battle as well as it could be fought, and the Repeal of the Union would be the work of the people, the responsibility resting absolutely upon them and not upon us.

This is my own way of looking at the situation, and why I adhere to the policy, which you think will be 'brushed aside,' of changes in County Government, &c. That policy may fail, but at any rate it is a Conservative policy; the surrender to Home Rule, no matter how you disguise it, is the reverse of conservative as you will be the first to admit. The Disraeli epoch of constant metamorphoses of principles and party has passed away.

Radical work must be done by Radical artists; thus less mischief will arise.

Yours sincerely,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

'I cannot say,' wrote Lord Salisbury, to whom this correspondence had been referred (December 6), 'how heartily I agree in the tone of your letter to Morris.'

The whole political situation was considered at a Cabinet Council on the 16th. Decision was taken to go on with the Government, to meet Parliament and await results. The outlines of the Queen's Speech were considered. Lord Randolph was most anxious to assign a foremost place to the reform of Parliamentary Procedure, as described in his memorandum. The Cabinet, having listened to long speeches on Irish matters, were tired and disposed to be irritable. The subject was one with which they were very familiar and on which many of them had already committed themselves. One Minister whom Lord Randolph thought he had conciliated the day before, pronounced absolutely against it. Lord Salisbury practised what he called 'the decorous reserve proper to one who had been so long out of the House of Commons.' The whole question was abruptly postponed. This defeat filled Lord Randolph with mortification. He loved his own plans ardently. He cared too much for the objects at stake to be

1885 Æt. 36 skilful in personal diplomacy. He could fight; he could lead; he could drive; but a stolid junta of Cabinet Ministers—'holy men,' as he called them, vexed his soul. He was grievously disappointed at what he took to be the summary dismissal of a most important subject. He wrote in deep despondency to the Prime Minister. Lord Salisbury consoled him in a letter almost affectionate in character. All would come right if he drafted his proposals and chose a better opportunity of taking the sense of the Cabinet upon them.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

India Office: December 17, 1885.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I am very grateful for your kind letter, and intensely relieved to learn that you consider the question of giving to Procedure a prominent place in our programme as still quite open. I shall do as you tell me, and place on paper elaborated proposals for the more efficient and speedy transaction of 'business.' You are, I know, quite right in blaming me for having been precipitate on Tuesday. I cannot help it, and shall never be able to attain to that beatific state of chronic deliberation which is the peculiarity of * * *, * * * & Co., and also of the Turk.

This I add—that Procedure reform does not necessarily entail rapid legislation. 'Business' includes Estimates, Budget and Supply. It is the transaction of this that I am more especially anxious to promote. Further, assuming that owing to some miraculous exercise of superhuman control H.M. Government remained in office, I would suggest that there might be very considerable tactical advantages from not plunging immediately into legislation, and from gaining time by setting the House of Commons to work on a difficult question in the consideration and settlement of which no issue of party or of confidence need arise.

Yours most sincerely,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

The Cabinet did not meet again until the New Year, but Christmas was not a season of unbroken peace and goodwill to Her Majesty's Ministers. Not one, however experienced and imaginative, could penetrate the obscurity of the future or calculate the crisis to which events were hurrying. The election had left them in a large minority. The Government of Ireland was rapidly passing into the hands of the National League. The Viceroy had resigned. Mr. Gladstone was revolving vast and unfathomable schemes. Parliament was to meet for regular business upon January 21. Meanwhile the days were disturbed by every kind of rumour and alarm. Lord Randolph Churchill, who always cultivated the acquaintance of clever men irrespective of their political opinion, had friends in every camp and possessed many special channels of information. All he could gather he wrote to his chief:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

India Office: December 22, 1885.

. . . Now I have a great deal to tell you.

Labouchere came to see me this morning. He asked me our intentions. I gave him the following information. I can rely upon him: (1) That there would be no motion for adjournment after the 12th, but that business would be immediately proceeded with after three or four days' swearing. On this he said that, if we liked to go out on a motion

1885 Æt. 36 for adjournment, he thought the other side might accommodate us. I told him that such an ineffably silly idea had never entered our heads. Then he told me that he had been asked whether he could ascertain if a certain statement as to a Tory Home Rule measure which appeared recently in the *Dublin Daily Express* was Ashbourne's measure, and if the Tories meant to say 'Aye' or 'No' to Home Rule; to which I replied that it had never crossed the mind of any member of the Government to dream even of departing from an absolute unqualified 'No,' and that all statements as to Ashbourne's plan were merely the folly of the *Daily News*. Then I was very much upset, for he proceeded to tell me that on Sunday week last Lord Carnarvon had met Justin McCarthy, and had confided to him that he was in favour of Home Rule in some shape, but that his colleagues and his party were not ready, and asked whether Justin McCarthy's party would agree to an inquiry, which he thought there was a chance of the Government agreeing to, and which would educate his colleagues and his party if granted and carried through. I was consternated, but replied that such a statement was an obvious lie; but, between ourselves, I fear it is not—perhaps not even an exaggeration or a misrepresentation. Justin McCarthy is on the staff of the *Daily News*. Labouchere is one of the proprietors, and I cannot imagine any motive for his inventing such a statement. If it is true, Lord Carnarvon has played the devil. Then I told Labouchere that if the G.O.M. announced any Home Rule project, or indicated any such project, and by so doing placed the Government in a minority, resignation was not the only course; that there was another alternative which might even be announced in debate, and the announcement of which might complete the squandering of the Liberal party, and that his friend at Hawarden had better not omit altogether that card from his calculations as to his opponents' hands. Lastly, I communicated to him that, even if the Government went out and Gladstone introduced a Home Rule Bill, I should not hesitate, if other circumstances were favourable, to agitate Ulster even to resistance beyond constitutional limits; that Lancashire would follow Ulster, and would lead England; and that he was at liberty to communicate this fact to the G.O.M.[1]

Meanwhile Mr. Gladstone, although embarrassed and forestalled by the disclosures in the newspapers, was deep in his Irish schemes. A chance conversation which he had had with Mr. Balfour in the middle of December had encouraged Mr. Gladstone to make a proposal to Lord Salisbury. He wrote (December 20) of the 'stir in men's minds' and of the urgency of the question, how it would be 'a public calamity if this great subject should fall into the lines of party conflict.' Only the Government could deal with such a question, and on public grounds he specially desired that the existing Government would deal with it. If Lord Salisbury and his friends would bring forward 'a proposal for settling the whole question of the future government of Ireland,' he would desire to treat it in the same spirit as he had shown in respect to Afghanistan and the Balkan Peninsula.

We are assured that Mr. Gladstone laid great stress upon this proffer of support. He had told the Queen two years before that the Irish question could only be settled by a conjunction of parties. He seems to have imagined that such a proposal would be regarded as a fair and magnanimous undertaking, and would receive, as some may think it deserved, the unprejudiced deliberation of the Cabinet. He had received full information—denied to Lord Randolph Churchill—of Lord Carnarvon's interview with Parnell. He believed in all sincerity that the Conservative Government were seriously considering, even if they were not already committed to, a policy of Home Rule in some form or other. He remembered the conferences on the Reform Bill, and the support which he had lately given to the new ministry. Neither he nor his friends seem fully to have appreciated the fear and aversion with which his opponents regarded him. His letter was treated with contempt. No other word will suffice. 'A public calamity,' forsooth! 'If this great question should fall into line of party conflict!' 'His hypocrisy,' wrote a Minister to whom this letter had been shown, 'makes me sick.' In the Tory Cabinet there was but one opinion about him. He was 'mad to take office'; and if his hunger were not 'prematurely gratified,' he would be forced into some line of conduct which would be 'discreditable to him and disastrous.'

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[1] Mr. Labouchere, who has checked and confirms this account of the conversation, remarks: 'As a matter of fact, Lord Randolph Churchill had asked me some time before to tell Mr. Gladstone that he would urge Ulster to resist by arms Home Rule, which I had done, and he now begged me to repeat to him his declaration of war.'

Mr. Gladstone wrote again on the 23rd, pressing for a definite answer. 'Time,' he said, 'was precious.' Lord Salisbury suavely replied through Mr. Balfour, in a letter which has since been made public, that a communication of the views of the Government would at this stage be at variance with usage. As Parliament would meet for business before the usual time, it was better 'to avoid a departure from ordinary practice which might be misunderstood.' There, of course, the matter ended; and thus idly drifted away what was perhaps the best hope of the settlement of Ireland which that generation was to see. Mr. Gladstone tarried no longer. On December 26[1] he drafted a memorandum for submission to the various noblemen and gentlemen with whom he proposed to act, setting forth with all possible precision his immediate intentions. If the Government were ready to deal with Ireland in a manner that would satisfy him and satisfy the Irish Nationalists, he would support them. If not, he would turn them out at the earliest convenient opportunity; and if in consequence entrusted with the duty of forming a Government, he would make the acceptance of a plan of 'duly guarded Home Rule' an indispensable condition.

Ministers meanwhile preserved an impenetrable silence. No one knew in what spirit, with what intention or with what allies they would meet Parliament. The Queen's Speech still engaged the attention of the Cabinet. Lord Randolph Churchill was indebted to a friend for a happy suggestion, which he did not delay to forward to Lord Salisbury:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

India Office: January 14, 1886.

Mr. Buckle has just been to see me, full of an idea of his own which struck me as good, and which I persuaded him not to spoil by bringing it out in to-morrow's *Times*.

He wishes the Queen's Speech of 1833 to be imitated, when, after the agitation of O'Connell, the Government declared in the Speech their intention of maintaining the Union. I send you the paragraph and also the paragraphs from the Speech of 1834, which seem still more to the purpose. Mr. Buckle very forcibly argues that some declaration of such a kind will force on the question at once, and prevent Gladstonian shuffling being resorted to successfully. The Irish would be obliged to meet such a challenge, and all parties would have to declare themselves. . . .

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[1] *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii. 270.

The paragraph which was finally adopted was modelled on the lines of the Speech of 1834:—

The King's Speech, Feb. 4, 1834.	*The Queen's Speech, Jan.* 21, 1886.
But I have seen, with feelings of deep regret and just indignation, the continuance of attempts to excite the people of that country to demand a repeal of the Legislative Union. This bond of our national strength and safety I have already declared my fixed and unalterable resolution, under the blessing of Divine Providence, to maintain inviolate by all the means in my power. In support of this determination I cannot doubt the zealous and effectual co-operation of my Parliament and my people.	I have seen with deep sorrow the renewal, since I last addressed you, of the attempt to excite the people of Ireland to hostility against the Legislative Union between that country and Great Britain. I am absolutely opposed to any disturbance of that fundamental law, and in resisting it I am convinced that I shall be heartily supported by my Parliament and my people.

But the Tory leader was meditating a more decided challenge. He proposed to meet Parliament with a declaration of a Coercion policy which should disperse all doubts as to the relations of his Government with the Parnellites and should throw upon the Opposition the odium of defeating a Government upon a measure affecting law and order. He may have been led to this decision partly by a desire that the armies should face each other squarely in the coming battle. Partly, no doubt, he was persuaded thereto by the growing clamour and pressure of those sections of his own party who are always powerful to urge repressive measures. Sulky murmurs at the Carlton; loud complainings in the *Times*; trumpeted advent of Loyalist and Orange deputations claiming the protection of the Crown—all the storm-signals were flying. But there was a considerable case upon the merits. When Lord Randolph Churchill had visited Ireland in October he found the Viceroy anxious and alarmed by the growing power of the National League, and that organisation was now greatly extended. Throughout those parts of Ireland where the National League was supreme, liberty and law were gravely endangered. There was not, indeed, that kind of treasonable organisation which had existed in 1865 and 1867; nor was there such an amount of capital crime as culminated in the Phœnix Park murders; but a sullen, widespread and well-organised spirit of resistance to the laws of property had taken possession of the Irish people and grew worse week by week. 'There were in Ireland, and there are in Ireland now,' said Lord Randolph at Paddington (February 13, 1886), 'two governments—there is the Government of the Queen and the government of the National League—and the Government of the Queen is not the stronger government of the two in many parts of Ireland.'

Lord Salisbury first mentions the subject on January 13. 'I am very perturbed,' he writes, 'about

1886 — ÆT. 36 the state of Ireland.' Three days later he met the Cabinet with definite proposals. Lord Ashbourne had prepared a Coercion Bill, and the Prime Minister had drafted a paragraph for the Queen's Speech announcing its immediate introduction. The Cabinet was startled. Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had not prepared themselves for such a departure, grave as they knew the situation in Ireland to be. They were not satisfied that a case for special legislation was disclosed, still less that it could be sustained in the House of Commons. Both remembered their speeches of the previous summer. Neither responded sympathetically to the militant and autocratic temper of the mass of the party. The council was long and stormy and Ministers separated without having come to any decision. Meanwhile the resignation of Lord Carnarvon was publicly announced.

The decision of Lord Salisbury's Administration to introduce a Coercion Bill in January 1886 has been the subject of much hostile criticism. It has been censured as a resort to extra-constitutional measures, not for the sake of public safety, but as a party manœuvre. It has been denounced as the callous and unscrupulous reversal of a policy of conciliation so soon as the Irish vote had been cast at the election. There is a degree of justice and truth in these harsh accusations, but it is only a degree; and if the Ministers concerned require a defence, that defence is best supplied by their own secret letters during these days of perplexity and stress.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury. 1886

Carlton Club: January 16, 1886. ÆT. 36

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I cannot resist writing to you on Ireland while the proceedings of to-day's Cabinet are fresh in my mind. As far as I could ascertain, the exact difference of opinion between the view which you hold and the view which I ventured to express amounts (in the measure of time) to a month at the outside. You would announce and produce a Bill at once. It appears to me that at present there is no sufficient Parliamentary case for a Bill, estimated by the weight of facts adduced; and that the Bill which you may decide upon now, upon your incomplete grounds, may and will in all probability be utterly insufficient to meet the facts which you will have to deal with in abundance in a period of time which may be calculated by weeks and even days.

What I would like to know, if I am not asking too much, is this—What influence or information not yet disclosed is compelling you to lay such a heavy burden on your sadly inefficient colleagues in the House of Commons? I assume as indubitable that you consider, and almost entirely guide your action by, the state of parties in the House of Commons—that is involved in the decision come to in December to carry on the Government—yet I am certain that you know that none of us could sustain a case for Coercion. Yet you press it on us—for we could have come to an agreement to-day on Lord Cranbrook's suggestion, only that evidently it was not acceptable or good in your eyes.

I wish I knew what you really wanted, and how you wished it to be worked out. I have never thought of anything except the success, or at least the credit, of *your* Government; and, knowing how much depends on the House of Commons, I am at the present moment only occupied in imagining how the action which you seem to favour could be effectively sustained from a House of Commons point of view. I do not think you will accuse me of arrogance or conceit if I avow my belief that, unless you show me the way very clearly, that action must fail disastrously. I do not want it to fail so. I know how very great and high your position is, what a really fine party you have behind you, how great their confidence in you is (on these points I do not believe I am capable of making an error), and I am most anxious that that great instrument on which depends not merely the item of Ireland, but also the interests of the entire Empire and home community, should not be damaged or blunted by weak and inefficient House of Commons action such as the immediate demand for Coercion will in practice involve.

One word as regards the Government of Ireland. You think the situation so serious that it demands a Coercion Bill. That necessitates a strong Irish Government. That Government you have not got. I think there are three men in the Government who would answer to the requirements of the position—Lord Cranbrook, Mr. Smith, and (please don't be shocked) myself. Of the three I greatly prefer Mr. Smith. But, assuming that you have decided it is your duty to carry on the Government until you are turned out, I implore you not to think of [the arrangement Lord Salisbury had suggested]. No extra laws could make that good or stable. I hope you won't be vexed with me for writing so freely. I am only anxious to find myself on Monday loyally and strenuously supporting whatever you may think best to be done; but I admit I have not been able hitherto to refrain from shrinking to take part in an enterprise desperate in its nature, involving certain and immediate Parliamentary death, and which, if determined on, will only leave you without one or two of your most faithful supporters in the House of Commons. Not that they will refuse to obey what you order, but that the order itself will be their ruin.

Yours most sincerely,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

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Confidential. Foreign Office: January 16, 1886.

My dear Randolph,—I cannot say how much touched I am by the great kindness and loyalty of your letter. I cannot help feeling how little I deserve it. I will tell you at once what my dominant feeling is. It is that we should be a united Cabinet—if possible with a united party. I have been throughout ready to postpone my individual opinion to this primary consideration. We have no right to the luxury of divided councils in a crisis such as this. It is evident that the great majority of the Cabinet—and, I believe, the great majority of the party—wish earnestly for a policy which will show that we do not shrink from the duty of government, and that we mean to stand by the Loyalists. The disaster I am afraid of is that we should be driven from office on some motion insisting on the necessity of a vigorous step, and our position in Opposition would then be very feeble and we should be much discredited.

I really feel very strongly and deeply all the kindness you have shown to me, and the great and most successful efforts you have made to sustain the Government. I should differ from you and Beach with the most extreme reluctance. But do not let us take any line which will brand us in the eyes of our countrymen—or will enable our opponents to do so—as the timid party, who let things float because they dared not act. The time is coming on us when people will long for government: do not let us get a character of shrinking from responsibility.

The question of the *personnel* of the [Irish] Government must be considered, but the Speech presses for settlement in the first instance. I should have thought that the notorious growth of this 'second government' throughout Ireland, overshadowing the law and the Queen's authority and securing its power by organised terror, would have sustained a case for such a Bill as Gibson produced. If

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you remain of the opposite opinion, let us consider whether some such phrase as the enclosed could unite us.[1] It is merely a suggestion. I confess I have a heavy heart in the whole matter. I have serious doubts whether I am doing my duty. But my train is going. Perhaps I may write again from Hatfield.

Ever yours very truly,
SALISBURY.

Lord Randolph now surrendered his view altogether. Never before or afterwards did the two men stand in such cordial relationship. A comradeship in anxiety had drawn these contrasted natures, each so vehement and earnest after its own fashion, very close together:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

India Office: January 16, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I am very grateful for your letter, which enables me to enter more fully into the position from which you view things than I have been able hitherto to do. I greatly like the paragraph suggested, and believe firmly that it meets with wisdom, tact and courage the necessities and the possibilities of the situation. But, *after all*, you are the head of the Government, and have had a very long experience of public affairs; and if you think it absolutely incumbent to go further—well, then, further we must go. A collapse of the Government at the present moment would be a catastrophe too hideous to contemplate. 1886 — Æt. 36

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[1] Lost. The passage ultimately adopted reads as follows:—

'The social no less than the material condition of that country engages my anxious attention. Although there has been during the last year no marked increase of serious crime, there is in many places a concerted resistance to the enforcement of legal obligations, and I regret that the practice of organised intimidation continues to exist. I have caused every exertion to be used for the detection and punishment of these crimes, and no effort will be spared on the part of my Government to protect my Irish subjects in the exercise of their legal rights and the enjoyment of individual liberty. If, as my information leads me to apprehend, the existing provisions of the law should prove to be inadequate to cope with these growing evils, I look with confidence to your willingness to invest my Government with all necessary powers.'

I have said all that occurs to me at much too great length and with far too much reiteration. *Kismet.*

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

There is a passage in the speech of Sir R. Peel on the Address in '33, where the constitutional position required before a Coercion demand is very clearly and weightily laid down.

He wrote to Beach accordingly. The Chancellor of the Exchequer was more unyielding and his letter shows the variety of strong characters arrayed against Mr. Gladstone :—

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach to Lord Randolph Churchill.

January 17, 1886.

My dear Churchill,—Of course I should readily accept the sentence Salisbury suggests. But though his letter touches and influences me, it does not persuade me to anything more; and I am sorry your reply goes so far. I do not in the least believe that, with such Irish paragraphs as we are all ready to accept, any motion insisting on the necessity of a vigorous step would be ever proposed, much less carried, against us. I do not think in such a matter we ought to be governed by the ignorant wish of 'the great majority of the party' or be forced to action we do not approve for fear of being branded as the 'timid party.' If these are Salisbury's reasons for Coercion, my opinion remains the same.

But his last sentences require explanation. If by 'serious doubts whether I am doing my duty' he means that he is himself persuaded that the moment has come

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when the government of Ireland cannot be carried on without it, and that he ought not therefore to agree to delay, that is another matter. I would yield my opinion, strong as it is, to his convictions, but *only to his convictions.* And in that case he *must* have a man to govern Ireland.

Yours sincerely,
M. E. Hicks-Beach.

Monday's Cabinet was united upon the Queen's Speech. Lord Salisbury decided to entrust the Irish Office to Mr. Smith. Lord Randolph Churchill, who had acquired much influence with him, was chosen to press it upon him. The task was thankless and unpromising; the occasion momentous; but the post of difficulty and peril was also the post of honour. Gravely and reluctantly Smith accepted, and Lord Cranbrook became Minister of War in his stead. 'I saw Mr. Smith this morning,' wrote Lord Randolph to the Prime Minister (January 20), 'and used every argument to persuade him to take in hand the government of Ireland. The appointment should be settled to-day and announced to-morrow morning without fail. If there is any weakness in our attitude on Coercion (which I do not at all admit) it will be more than contradicted by the appointment of Mr. Smith. This of itself will do much to restore confidence. Please do not, if possible, allow any delay. On second thoughts,' added Lord Randolph mischievously, 'would Lord Iddesleigh like to go as Lord-Lieutenant?'

The appointment of the new Irish Secretary was announced on the morning of the 21st, and that same day formal business, including election of Speaker, having been previously completed, Parliament was opened in state and the Session began. 1886 ÆT. 36

The Government prolonged a precarious existence for five days. Both parties were in a turmoil. On the one side Whigs and Moderate Liberals endeavoured, without success, to extract from Mr. Gladstone definite declarations upon Ireland. In the Tory camp the demand for a Coercion Bill was loud and insistent. Although the party as a whole had been beaten in the elections, the bulk of its members came fresh from remarkable victories in the big towns. Their temper was aggressive. They welcomed the declaration of the Chancellor of the Exchequer that Mr. Smith would go to Ireland at once to consider what special measures were necessary.

We are told that Mr. Gladstone did not resolve to overturn the Ministry until they definitely declared for Coercion on January 26. That act, he considered, imposed the responsibility of government upon him. But Lord Randolph Churchill's correspondence shows that he had information as early as January 13 that some independent member would move an amendment to the Address regretting that no announcement was made of provision for the wants of the agricultural population. Whether this would fail, or would gain the support of a united Opposition, could not be ascertained till the House met. A few hours of Westminster were, however, sufficient to convince the Tory leaders that the temper of the majority was adverse to them, that virtual and effective agreement existed between Mr. Gladstone and Parnell and that Whig and Moderate Liberal support would almost certainly be insufficient to sustain them. They had decided on Coercion; they resolved, if possible, to place the details of their policy and the case in support of it before the country. The adroit and experienced Parliamentarians on the Treasury Bench used all their wits to obtain the necessary delay. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had given notice on the 21st that immediately on the conclusion of the debate on the Address he would move resolutions for the Reform of Procedure and that these would be pressed to the exclusion of other matters, 'subject to the intervention of any specially important or urgent business.' On the following day Lord Randolph Churchill suggested that the general debate on the Address should be brought to a conclusion and that the reforms in Parliamentary Procedure, the consideration of which Mr. Gladstone had declared in his election address ought to take precedence of legislation, might be decided before the amendments to the Address were considered. The changes which Ministers proposed were in themselves sufficiently startling to have absorbed the House in calmer times; and Lord Randolph no doubt calculated upon this. But Mr. Gladstone found no difficulty in persuading his party that Procedure reform might safely be a little delayed. Lord Randolph's proposal was ignored and the debate continued.

On the 23rd Mr. Smith started for Dublin, which he reached on the morning of the 24th. The imminent defeat of the Ministry had now become certain. An amendment relating to Burma was moved on the 25th. Mr. Gladstone, though recommending that no decision should be taken upon it, as other more convenient opportunities of discussing Indian matters would occur, indulged in acid criticism of the Burmese policy. 'Shall I answer him now?' asked Lord Randolph, taking up the red box in which the India Office papers reposed, 'or shall I wait for the Indian Budget?' 'Now or never,' answered the Leader of the House; and Lord Randolph thereupon, using the precise information of a great department with the skill of a practised debater, made a vigorous rejoinder. Upon the spur of the moment he managed to cite a number of instances from the record of the late Government where they had themselves been drawn into warlike operations, with, as Lord Randolph contended, far less justification than was presented in Burma. Mr. Gladstone was much provoked by such comparisons. He could not speak again himself, and as the Secretary for India proceeded he was observed repeatedly turning to those about him and behind him, explaining how this did not apply; how that was wholly unfounded: how this, again, was a travesty; and so forth. The Conservatives were delighted at Lord Randolph's prowess. The attack was repelled. On the next amendment the Liberal Front Bench abstained, and the Government survived by twenty-eight. But this was the end.

Faced by approaching destruction, the Government cared only to rally their friends, to make one last bid for Whig support and to declare plainly the issue on which they were to be dismissed. The Cabinet which met on the morning of the 26th desired the immediate introduction of a Coercion Bill. But Mr. Smith was not inclined to be hustled. He could not realise the rapid developments which had taken place in his absence. Harassed by telegrams, he appealed to Lord Randolph. The friendship between them was steadily ripening. Of all the characters with which this story deals, scarcely one improves so much upon acquaintance as this valiant and honest man. He was the true type of what Disraeli calls 'an English worthy.' Here is his letter:—

Mr. Smith to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private.

Chief Secretary's Office, Dublin Castle: January 25, 1886, 6 P.M.

My dear Churchill,—I have had a telegram from Salisbury which affords evidence of pressure for what is termed 'prompt action,' and I have replied by letter. Another telegram has just come in from Beach, which cannot be deciphered before post leaves.

There is only one opinion here—that the League must be suppressed and large powers obtained to protect life, property and public order, unless the Government is prepared to treat for terms of capitulation with the Parnellites. But the Land Question is at the bottom of the trouble, and gives all the force to the agitation. As at present advised, I should be unwilling to ask for large repressive powers unless I had authority to promise a large land scheme.

But these telegrams indicate restlessness in my colleagues. So big a question cannot be decided offhand. It is more than peace or war with a foreign Power. We are at a crisis in the relations of the Imperial Government with Ireland. I may very possibly fail to do any good, but I will not be hurried into a positive decision on such momentous issues by the party or the papers; and if my colleagues think the three or four days I propose to take too long, I will return to London with pleasure. Let me hear from you either by telegraph or post.

Yours sincerely,
W. H. Smith.

The correspondence was continued by cypher telegrams:—

Lord R. Churchill to Mr. Smith.

January 26.

Greatly obliged by your letter.

Absolutely necessary for Government to state to-night their intentions with regard to Ireland—viz. suppression of National League followed by Land Bill. This is the only method of averting defeat on Jesse Collings. Notice should be given to-day of introduction of repressive Bill on Thursday, coupled with revival of rules of urgency. Telegraph to me your views. I would earnestly press your return to London.

Mr. Smith to Lord R. Churchill.

I think proposed action looks precipitate. There is no excessive urgency here, and great care is required in framing and describing measure. I should prefer, if possible, to provide against the intimidation of League than denounce it by name. I cross to-night.

Lord Randolph replied from the House of Commons at six o'clock the same day:—

Your telegram received half-hour after Cabinet separated. Beach has just announced introduction of Bill by you on

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Thursday for suppression of National League and other dangerous associations, for the prevention of intimidation and for the protection of life, property and order in Ireland.[1] Of course, great sensation.

It is not improbable, however, that we shall be defeated to-night, in which case we shall resign. I showed your wire to Lord Salisbury. We both agreed you would not wish unanimous decision of Cabinet modified.

Mr. Smith arrived in London with the daylight, to read upon the early placards that the Government was out.

The famous Jesse Collings Amendment produced an interesting debate; but as the members listened to the opposing views of Mr. Chaplin and Mr. Joseph Arch, of Mr. Goschen and Mr. Bradlaugh, of Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington, they knew that behind the relevant arguments of the speakers, behind all the talk of peasant-proprietors, allotments, vegetables, and cows, stood a far greater issue. 'If the result of this division,' said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 'should be unfavourable to Her Majesty's Government we shall accept that decision without regret. We assumed office reluctantly, and we shall leave it willingly as soon as we are assured that we do not possess the support of the House. But the success of this motion will have another and graver effect. . . . It will not only be a defeat of Her Majesty's Government, but it will be a defeat of the policy . . . which they believe it to be their duty to pursue with respect to Ireland.' 1886 Æt. 36

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[1] This was accompanied by the promise of a Bill dealing with the Land Question, pursuing in a more extensive sense the policy indicated by the Land Purchase Act in 1885.

The Government were beaten on the division by seventy-nine votes, notwithstanding that sixteen Liberals, including Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen and Sir Henry James, voted with them and fifty-six others stayed away. The next day Lord Salisbury's Cabinet resigned.

Thus, after a brief but exciting reign, fell the 'Ministry of Caretakers.' They had confronted enormous difficulties with small resources. They existed at the caprice of their enemies. They had office, but not power. Yet they faced their task and their opponents with courage and skill. Their Administration was defended by powerful oratory; it was sustained—except in its dying moments—by sedate and efficient Executive action. In a few short months the Conservative party were freed from the reproach of irresponsibility and their capacity for government was recognised by the country. The peace of Europe was preserved amid grave embarrassments and under their guidance the nation emerged safely and honourably from the Russian crisis. They legislated with unexpected good fortune. They inaugurated a new policy, never since abandoned, of Land Purchase in Ireland. They restored and greatly strengthened the defences of India. They laid the foundations of Australian Federation, and by a successful, inexpensive and almost bloodless military expedition added a vast and fertile province to the dominions of the Crown.

CHAPTER XIII

HOME RULE

'Vote it as you please. There is a company of poor men that will spend all their blood before they see it settled so.'—CARLYLE, *Cromwell.*

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ON the last day in January Mr. Gladstone undertook to form his Administration. Its complexion was indicated by the first of the new appointments: for Mr. Morley became Chief Secretary to the Lord-Lieutenant. This was followed, without delay, on the one hand by the statement that Lord Spencer had acquiesced in the new Irish policy and would be Lord President of the Council; and upon the other by rumours of Whig refusals. For some days negotiations were protracted with Lord Hartington, Mr. Goschen and Sir Henry James; but, whatever signs of hesitation had marked their previous course, their action now was decided. Sir Henry James was offered successively both the Lord Chancellorship and the Home Secretaryship, and even more important Executive offices were pressed upon the others. All were declined. Doubt and reluctance were also manifested by Mr. Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan and both required and received assurances that they were not committed, by joining the Government, to the support of any Irish policy which involved the creation of a separate Parliament. For the rest it may be noticed that Sir William Harcourt became Chancellor of the Exchequer; that Lord Rosebery went to the Foreign Office; and that neither Lord Derby nor Mr. Forster was included in the Government.

The traveller who visits an old battlefield can never fully understand what its various natural features meant to the combatants. He is shown, perhaps, a rocky ridge which is called the key of the position. He reads that it was taken and repurchased on hard terms more than once during the day. But it is an ordinary object in the landscape. A dozen such eminences have been seen during the morning's ride. Was it really so important? Were the fortunes of kingdoms actually for some hours involved in the possession of those few acres of rank grass and scattered stone? As he stands serenely on ground where once the bravest soldier hardly dared to crawl, he can scarcely believe it. Yet, to the men who fought, those rocks meant much more than life or death. Duty was there; honour was there; and in the end victory. And if the smoky curtain that hangs about the field were lifted and the view enlarged, it might be seen that great causes of truth, or justice, or freedom, and long tranquil years in smiling lands depended indeed upon this ragged ridge, made famous by the blundering collision of two armies, worthless except for the tactical purpose of the moment and probably ill-adapted and wrongly selected even for that.

The actual provisions of the Home Rule Bill do not at all convey the magnitude of the issue or explain the gravity with which it was regarded. A proposal to establish by statute, subject to guarantees of Imperial supremacy, a colonial Parliament in Ireland for the transaction of Irish business may indeed be unwise, but is not, and ought not to be, outside the limits of calm and patient consideration. Such a proposal is not necessarily fraught with the immense and terrific consequences which were so generally associated with it. A generation may arise in England who will question the policy of creating subordinate legislatures as little as we question the propriety of Catholic Emancipation and who will study the records of the fierce disputes of 1886 with the superior manner of a modern professor examining the controversies of the early Church. But that will not prove the men of 1886 wrong or foolish in speech and action.

The controversy of 1886 can never be resolved. Whatever may happen in the future, neither party can be brought to the bar of history and proved by actual experience right or wrong. The cases of Catholic Emancipation, of the Great Reform Bill, of the Repeal of the Corn Laws, are differently placed. We know that in certain circumstances a great change was made and that that change was immediately vindicated by events and afterwards ratified by posterity. The opponents of the change stand condemned. No such assured conclusion of the Home Rule Question of 1886 can ever be reached, unless by some unthinkable coincidence the actual circumstances of that time were reconstructed.

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Mr. Gladstone ultimately succeeded in convincing not only his personal friends and half his fellow-countrymen of his entire sincerity, but his most capable opponents also. Yet at the time his motives were impugned, and not without much reason. Concessions to Ireland made by any British Government which depends for its existence on the Irish vote, will naturally and necessarily be suspect. There must always be a feeling in English minds that such a government is not a free agent, that it is trafficking for personal or party advantage with what belongs to the nation. In 1886 Mr. Gladstone's Administration lay under deep suspicion. His own appeals for an independent majority at the election; the sudden conversion of his principal colleagues; the absolute dependence of his power upon Mr. Parnell's followers; the precipitate haste with which he had taken office; all tended to confirm the distrust and prejudices of his opponents. Whether his Bill was proposed upon its merits or not, it was not considered, and could not be considered, upon them. It looked like surrender—not advance; and surrender made shameful by the party advantage that was its first-fruits. The violent scenes in the House of Commons, the declarations of hatred towards England reiterated by Irish Nationalism, however historically excusable, the long nightmare of outrage and unrest through which Ireland was struggling, the American gold, the dynamite explosions, the bloody daggers in the

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Phœnix Park, had bitten deep into British minds and memories. The tireless conflicts of Catholic and Protestant, of landlord and tenant, provoked and disquieted statesmen of every complexion. Some there were who rose to Mr. Gladstone's level of enthusiasm, who shared his consciousness of unswerving rectitude and dreams of glorious achievement; but by most of the eminent men in England the Irish proposals of 1886 were regarded as the surrender of national heirlooms at the compulsion of public enemies, involving an act of practical secession with potential consequences of revolution and civil war. And once this conviction was adopted, all chance that the plan itself would be fairly weighed was inevitably destroyed. Radicals who, like Mr. Chamberlain, were committed to all sorts of schemes of devolution, who looked with favour upon National Councils or Legislatures of the Canadian provincial type, were, by the stroke of crisis, united with the ultra-Conservatives and authoritarians. A state of war existed and political leaders selected their positions upon tactical reasons alone. Here it was good to fight; there it was bad. At this point a stand might be made; that it would be well to concede. All question of a reasonable settlement vanished. Every man chose his ground and fought upon it to win. 'Never,' said Lord Randolph in after years to a friend, 'have we approached the Irish Question *avec de bonnes paroles et de bons procédés.*'

Thus it happened that in the tremendous enterprise upon which Mr. Gladstone had now determined to embark, he found arrayed against him nearly all the leading men and most of the strongest forces in England and Scotland. When a party has been for many years supreme in the State, it draws into itself by its prestige and authority many men who are not really with it in sympathy and opinion. The Whigs and many moderate Liberals had long been estranged. They were held by the force of party associations alone and most of them welcomed a shock which ended the strain and freed them from obligations, they could no longer faithfully discharge. The wealthy Whig Peers were glad to escape from Radical associates and to be ranked in the mass of their order. Statesmen of the old school like Mr. Bright, Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen, with many followers whose talents adorned the Liberal party, were quite unprepared to adapt themselves to the new conditions which a democratic franchise had imposed. The Home Rule proposals—already in themselves a sufficient cause for final separation—were, besides, a convenient opportunity. All this was to have been expected, and no doubt the Irish accession was estimated to fill the gap. But a Radical defection was utterly unforeseen.

Of all the men who followed Mr. Gladstone into the Lobby on the night when the Jesse Collings amendment dismissed the 'Ministry of Caretakers' from office, Mr. Chamberlain stood to gain the greatest profit, both in the furtherance of his political opinions and in his personal advancement, from the turn events were taking. For five years he had battled with the Whigs in the Cabinet; for five years they had checked him. He had declared he would not serve with them again. Now they were going. Their influence alone had enabled the Prime Minister to moderate the Radical demands, of which he was the champion. In the place of that influence was now to be substituted the party of Mr. Parnell. If Mr. Chamberlain had been powerful before, what would he be in the Liberal Governments of the future? If Mr. Gladstone had yielded much to his insistence in the past, what must he concede thereafter? At the very moment when the Radical movement was growing in strength, after an election in which the 'Unauthorised Programme' had saved the counties from the Tory triumph in the towns, the whole composition of the Liberal party was to be changed—and changed wholly in his favour. The Prime Minister was a very old man. The path was already almost clear. The future of the party lay at the feet of the leader of thorough, precise and militant Radicalism.

And if in one direction all prospects looked so bright, the other seemed entirely barred. He was in acute antagonism with Lord Hartington. Lord Salisbury had just called him 'Jack Cade.' The Whigs regarded him as the cause of their undoing. To the Tories he was a warning of the wrath to come. By many acts of his public life, by a hundred speeches, by the affirmation of important principles and the support of definite measures, he had cut himself off from Whigs and Tories alike. Many men will wrestle with their own party or change to another party, but few will face political extinction. That such a man, careless perhaps of office, but ambitious for power, should in such circumstances quarrel with Mr. Gladstone, tear his own Radical following to pieces and go forth into the night-storm almost alone, was a fact not in human wisdom to be known or imagined in dreams. Yet his reply to Parnell's demand had been prompt and plain. 'If these, and these alone, are the terms on which Mr. Parnell's support is to be obtained,' he declared as early as September, 'I will not enter into the compact.'

That Lord Randolph Churchill was consistent and sincere in his opposition to Home Rule was at the time much questioned by both sides, and some shadow of that suspicion has remained. He it was who had rendered possible the co-operation between the Irish party and the Tory Opposition, which had placed and maintained the late Government in office. He was known to hold liberal views on Irish problems. He was described as being unscrupulous in Parliamentary manœuvre. He had opposed the renewal of Coercion. He had defended the Maamtrasna inquiry. If it were true that the Conservative Government had had any Home Rule dealings as a Government, he was reputed their agent. If any Minister had trafficked independently, he was that Minister. Many Home Rulers and Orangemen, agreeing in nothing else, agreed in believing that he at any rate had been ready upon a Home Rule basis to bargain with Parnell. These suspicions are injurious. No man was more vigorous in his public resistance to Home Rule or more vehement in his language than Lord Randolph Churchill; and if in the midst of his denunciations of Mr. Gladstone, while he was rousing England and inflaming Ulster, it had been true that he was fortified by no real conviction, and had been ready a few months before to sell all that he now declared sacred, an odious charge would have been brought home.

The documents printed in preceding chapters constitute an unassailable defence. No Unionist politician has a clearer record. Lord Randolph Churchill was perfectly willing to work with the Irish members. He understood how much they had in common with the Conservative party, and with the best part of the Conservative party. He had no prejudices and many sympathies in their direction. But his arrangement with them, or with any of them—for he counted on dividing their forces—would have been social, religious or economic in its character. It would never have been of a National character. To give the Irish the educational system they desired, to court and coax the Bishops, to win the Catholic Church to the side of the Conservative party—these were objects which all his life he faithfully pursued. The first political pamphlet he wrote was on Irish intermediate education. Whether as a Minister in 1885, or out of office in 1888 and 1889, he will be found deep in schemes of Catholic conciliation by Irish educational reform—primary, intermediate and university. One of the last letters this account contains returns to and reiterates this long-cherished idea. Almost his last speech in the House of Commons was in defence of Catholic schools. But to the repeal of the Parliamentary Union he was always unalterably opposed. He did not even think it worth while to consider seriously the many modified alternatives in which the times abounded. They might be wise or unwise; but they were not, he thought, within the functions of the Conservative party. He knew nothing of the Carnarvon incident, and was incensed to discover it. His letter to Lord Morris of December 7, 1885, shows how unyielding he was even to the suggestion of a conference, before the great attempt was made. His correspondence with Mr. Chamberlain, who always inclined to alternative proposals, proves him quite unconvinced in later years by the course of the struggle or by the change in his own position. 'It would require circumstances widely different and pressure of an almost overwhelming kind,' he wrote in August 1887, 'to induce any portion of the Tories to look at any scheme of Home Rule. Gladstone alone can deal with that measure; and I hope that if he does, and when he does, he may be kept in check and controlled by a powerful Opposition.'

The advent of this great crisis therefore threw him for the first time into complete sympathy with the whole Conservative party. All his energies and talents were freely expended in a cause for which he cared intensely. Mr. Gladstone's vast personal power may perhaps be measured by the opponents by whom he was confronted, and by whom he was so narrowly overborne. It would be profitless to compare the relative services of the various distinguished men who now ranged themselves against him; to observe that Sir Henry James made the heaviest sacrifices, that Mr. Chamberlain ran the greatest risks, that Lord Salisbury showed commanding wisdom or that Lord Hartington struck the weightiest blows. But when the history of the famous battle for the Union in 1886 comes to be worthily written, it will be found that no single man fought with effect in more different quarters of the field than Lord Randolph Churchill or was in the heart and centre of more decisive frays.

Outside the walls of Parliament the issue was determined chiefly in the cities of Birmingham and Belfast. The transference of the whole political strength of the great Midland centre of Radicalism to the Unionist cause and the fierce resistance of the Irish North, were the two most serious obstacles which Mr. Gladstone encountered. In both cities the conflict was marked by every circumstance of passion and excitement. In both Lord Randolph intervened as a leader. He possessed in an eminent degree many of the qualities which may be discovered in a successful military commander. He could detect with almost unerring skill the weak points in his enemy's array. He could make up his mind with bewildering rapidity and act upon the decision so formed with absolute confidence. He knew well how to separate what was vital from what was merely important or desirable. He was quite ruthless in casting away smaller objects for the sake of a greater. Few men were better suited to the storms of violent times. Till the explosion of Home Rule in the early days of December, he was deep in schemes of educational concession to the Catholic hierarchy—schemes which were in themselves delicate and complicated and which, on account of the suspicion they would have excited in Protestant Lancashire, were necessarily secret while a General Election was pending. But no sooner did Mr. Gladstone's intentions become known with certainty than Lord Randolph looked towards Ulster. All plans of Catholic Universities and nice correspondence with princes of the Church had to be unceremoniously stowed away till calmer weather. Christmas found him planning his visit to Belfast. By the New Year the arrangements were completed. The Ulster Hall was prepared and the Orange drums were beating. 'I decided some time ago,' he wrote bluntly to FitzGibbon, on February 16, 1886, 'that if the G.O.M. went for Home Rule, the Orange card would be the one to play. Please God it may turn out the ace of trumps and not the two. . . . I expect,' he added, 'your old Commission will go to the devil now.'

Lord Randolph was the first of the outgoing Ministers to break silence and in Paddington, on February 13, he defended the violent oscillations in

1886 — ÆT. 37 the Irish policy of the late Government—the contrast between the policy of August 1885 and that of January 1886. The reader is already in possession of the main features of that defence, but it is set forth in this speech in a complete argumentative shape; and though it is naturally a partisan account, it will be found to bear a close comparison with the facts now published. The situation in Ireland in August had not, he declared, necessitated the renewal of the Crimes Act. The provisions of the Crimes Act were not suited to deal with the National League; and by January the growth of that organisation required the creation of new and different weapons. 'If the hateful and malignant domination of the National League had been finally and for ever suppressed, if the restoration of order had been effective—then Lord Salisbury's Government were prepared to propose to Parliament measures which would to a large extent have met the legitimate aspirations of the Irish people, whether as regards Local Government or as regards the further settlement of some portions of the eternal Land Question, or as regards those wishes of the Catholics of Ireland on higher education which a large concurrence of the opinion of this country is disposed to look upon as right and reasonable.' He concluded by appealing for the support and encouragement of his constituents in his mission to Ulster upon which he was about to embark.

Lord Randolph crossed the Channel, and arrived at Larne early on the morning of February 22. He was welcomed like a king. Thousands of persons, assembling from the neighbouring townships, greeted him at the port. At Carrickfergus, where the train was stopped, he imitated—almost for the only time—a historic example by addressing a 'great crowd on the platform.' In Belfast itself a vast demonstration, remarkable for its earnestness and quality and amounting, it is computed, to more than seventy thousand people, marched past him. One who knew Ireland well declared that he had not believed 'there were so many Orangemen in the world.' That night the Ulster Hall was crowded to its utmost compass. In order to satisfy the demand for tickets all the seats were removed and the concourse—which he addressed for nearly an hour and a half—heard him standing. He was nearly always successful on the platform, but the effect he produced upon his audience in Belfast was one of the most memorable triumphs of his life. He held the meeting in the hollow of his hand. From the very centre of Protestant excitement he appealed to the loyal Catholics of Ireland to stand firm by the Union and at the same time, without using language of bigotry or intolerance, he roused the Orangemen to stern and vehement emotion. 1886 ÆT. 37

'Now may be the time,' he said, 'to show whether all those ceremonies and forms which are practised in Orange Lodges, are really living symbols or only idle and meaningless ceremonies; whether that which you have so carefully fostered, is really the lamp of liberty and its flame the undying and unquenchable fire of freedom. . . . . The time may

1886 be at hand when you will have to show that the path

ÆT. 37 of honour and safety is still illuminated by the light of other days. It may be that this dark cloud which is now impending over Ireland, will pass away without breaking. If it does, I believe you and your descendants will be safe for a long time to come. Her Majesty's Government hesitates. Like Macbeth before the murder of Duncan, Mr. Gladstone asks for time. Before he plunges the knife into the heart of the British Empire he reflects, he hesitates. . . . The demonstrations to-day will have a very useful effect not only upon the public mind in England, but also on the Ministerial mind, and many more of them must be held. And those demonstrations ought to be imposing not only from their numbers, but also for their orderly character. We are essentially a party of law and order and any violent action resorted to prematurely or without the most obvious and overwhelming necessity might have the most fatal and damaging effect upon the cause which we so dearly value and might alienate forces whose assistance would be beyond all price. The Loyalists in Ulster should wait and watch—organise and prepare. Diligence and vigilance ought to be your watchword; so that the blow, if it does come, may not come upon you as a thief in the night and may not find you unready and taken by surprise.

'I believe that this storm will blow over and that the vessel of the Union will emerge with her Loyalist crew stronger than before; but it is right and useful that I should add that if the struggle should continue and if my conclusions should turn out to be wrong, then I am of opinion that the struggle is not likely to remain within the lines of what we are accustomed to look upon as constitutional action. No portentous change such as the Repeal of the Union, no change so gigantic, could be accomplished by the mere passing of a law. The history of the United States will teach us a different lesson; and if it should turn out that the Parliament of the United Kingdom was so recreant from all its high duties, and that the British nation was so apostate to traditions of honour and courage, as to hand over the Loyalists of Ireland to the domination of an Assembly in Dublin which must be to them a foreign and an alien assembly, if it should be within the design of Providence to place upon you and your fellow-Loyalists so heavy a trial, then, gentlemen, I do not hesitate to tell you most truly that in that dark hour there will not be wanting to you those of position and influence in England who would be willing to cast in their lot with you and who, whatever the result, will share your fortunes and your fate. There will not be wanting those who at the exact moment, when the time is fully come—if that time should come—will address you in words which are perhaps best expressed by one of our greatest English poets:—

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The combat deepens; on, ye brave,
Who rush to glory or the grave.
Wave, Ulster—all thy banners wave,
And charge with all thy chivalry.'

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‘As I was bold enough to trouble you about your speech,’ wrote Lord Salisbury the next day, ‘I may be allowed to say that I thought it singularly skilful. You avoided all shoals, and said nothing to which any Catholic could object—and yet you contrived to rouse a great enthusiasm among the Protestants. And that I gather to be the general opinion. I am sure the effect of the speech will be very great in Ulster.’ Lord Salisbury made no secret of his opinion, and on March 3 publicly alluded to the Belfast speech as a ‘brilliantly successful effort.’ The Ministerialists, upon the other hand, were furious. Lord Randolph was accused of inciting to insurrection and treason and denounced as ‘a rebel in the skin of a Tory.’ The Parnellites were especially indignant that one whom they had been accustomed to regard with friendly feelings, should so far forget his duty as to make an inflammatory speech in Ireland; and as the delinquent entered the House of Commons the next night, he was greeted by a loud demonstration of hostility from the Nationalist benches, taking, if contemporary descriptions may be trusted, the form of prolonged and dismal groaning.

On the 26th Mr. Sexton requested the Government to afford an opportunity to the House for discussing a vote of censure upon Lord Randolph Churchill; and the Prime Minister, in refusing, was careful to base himself on the needs of public business alone. Lord Randolph, however, persisted in his courses and a few weeks later, in a letter to a Liberal-Unionist member, he repeated his menace in an

"Ulster will fight, & Ulster will be right".

even clearer form: 'If political parties and political leaders, not only Parliamentary but local, should be so utterly lost to every feeling and dictate of honour and courage as to hand over coldly, and for the sake of purchasing a short and illusory Parliamentary tranquillity, the lives and liberties of the Loyalists of Ireland to their hereditary and most bitter foes, make no doubt on this point—Ulster will not be a consenting party; Ulster at the proper moment will resort to the supreme arbitrament of force; Ulster will fight, Ulster will be right; Ulster will emerge from the struggle victorious, because all that Ulster represents to us Britons will command the sympathy and support of an enormous section of our British community, and also, I feel certain, will attract the admiration and the approval of free and civilised nations.'

The jingling phrase, 'Ulster will fight, and Ulster will be right,' was everywhere caught up. It became one of the war-cries of the time and spread with spirit-speed all over the country. The attitude of the Protestant North of Ireland became daily more formidable. The excitement in Belfast did not subside. Dangerous riots, increasing in fury until they almost amounted to warfare, occurred in the streets between the factions of Orange and Green. Fire-arms were freely used by the police and by the combatants. Houses were sacked and men and women were killed. So savage, repeated and prolonged were the disturbances, breaking out again and again in spite of all efforts to suppress them, that

1886 they became in the end the subject of a Parliamentary Commission, the evidence and report of which are not pleasant reading and proved, when finally published, damaging to the Orange party.

The subject was not, however, discussed in the House of Commons until May 20. An interlude in the Home Rule debate was required for the passage of an Arms Bill which the state of Ireland generally, and of Ulster in particular, had rendered necessary. Lord Randolph was, of course, the object of severe attack from the Irish party and especially from Mr. Parnell, who accused him of inciting, unintentionally, to murder and outrage. To this charge, and to a statement of Sir Henry James that his Ulster speech proved him 'half a traitor,' he replied indignantly. He was able to cite the authority of Lord Althorp, Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Morley and of the Prime Minister himself in support of the contention that circumstances might justify morally, if not technically, violent resistance or even civil war. He declined to recede in any way from his words, and the Conservative party cheered him loudly when he said so. Sir Henry James made a soft answer; but the extraordinary feature in the debate was the intervention of the Prime Minister. He did not arrive in the House until after Lord Randolph had spoken, but without delay he launched out upon a sonorous denunciation of his proceedings. He declared that such conduct reminded him of Mr. Smith O'Brien, who in 1848 had risen in his place and announced that, regarding constitutional means exhausted, he would forthwith return to Ireland and proceed to levy war against the Queen. But Mr. Smith O'Brien, argued Mr. Gladstone, was only a private member and a representative of the people. How much more reprehensible was such conduct when displayed by a former Minister of the Crown, by an ex-Secretary of State and by a Privy Councillor! It almost seemed, from the measured severity of the Prime Minister, that he intended to conclude by intimating that he had advised the Queen to strike Lord Randolph Churchill's name from the list of the Privy Council. But he avoided this natural conclusion to his argument. 'If,' he said, 'we were a weaker country, with less solid institutions, such occurrences as this would, in my opinion, have called for severe and immediate notice.' Mr. Plunket from the Front Opposition Bench defended Lord Randolph, but the Irish continued to attack him all the evening in an acrimonious fashion. The next day Lord Randolph wrote to the Prime Minister pointing out some inaccuracies in the words attributed to him. Mr. Gladstone replied tartly :—

10 Downing Street, Whitehall : May 21, 1886.

Dear Lord Randolph,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of this day, and it would be a matter of great regret to me if I had used words which misrepresented your statements on so important a question as that of resistance to the law.

My words rested mainly on a recollection of your speech in Ulster, and of your letter of May 7 to Mr. Young. To abridge or avoid any controversy which is avoidable, I will at once say I am content to take your opinions as you have yourself expressed them in the closing paragraph of your letter to Mr. Young.

Let us, then, if you please, consider that paragraph as already substituted for my words.

The only difference will be that to that paragraph I should feel constrained to apply the words in which last night I endeavoured to describe your opinions, without any subtraction or modification, in lieu of applying them to the description from memory which on the moment I endeavoured to give.

I remain, dear Lord Randolph,
Faithfully yours,
W. E. Gladstone.

There the matter ended, being crushed in the throng of greater events. Constitutional authorities will measure their censures according to their political opinions; but the fact remains that when men are sufficiently in earnest they will back their words by more than votes. ‘I am sorry to say,’ said Mr. Gladstone in 1884, in defence of Mr. Chamberlain's threat to march 100,000 men from Birmingham to London in support of the Franchise Bill, ‘that if no instructions had ever been addressed in political crises to the people of this country except to remember to hate violence and love order and exercise patience, the liberties of this country would never have been attained.’

Lord Randolph immediately on his return from Ulster, at the end of February, threw himself heart and soul into his favourite project of a coalition. To bring all Unionists together in one line of battle, strengthened by trust and comradeship, to spread with roses the path of every man or Minister who would separate from Mr. Gladstone, was his unwearying endeavour. He would not allow personal differences to disfigure that array. As early as January he had made friends with Lord Hartington, who was still deeply offended by the 'boa constrictor' speech. 1886 Æt. 37

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Hartington.

India Office: January 13, 1886.

Dear Lord Hartington,—I learnt some time ago that you had considered some remarks which I made in Manchester in November concerning yourself in your public position considerably exceeded the proper limits of political controversy. From your manner this afternoon when we met I venture to think that you will not misunderstand me when I endeavour to assure you that in case I am open to blame in this matter I greatly regret it; and indeed will admit that it is probable that on the occasion alluded to I dwelt upon events which I feel must ever be to you of a deeply painful memory in an unguarded and stupid manner.

There was, however, I hope you will believe, no intention on my part to say aught that you could object to on these grounds, and I am very sorry if it is the case that I gave you cause for reasonable and just complaint.

Yours faithfully,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

This, of course, put everything right. Lord Hartington replied with much cordiality, and the friendly relations thus re-established were thereafter consistently preserved and improved.

On March 2 Lord Randolph visited Manchester again, was received by enormous crowds in the streets and spoke at almost proportionate length in

1886 — Æt. 37 the evening to upwards of 12,000 people in the Pomona Gardens—a spot now occupied by the central pool of the Ship Canal. Certainly the offer which, with Lord Salisbury's consent, he made to the Whigs and Liberal seceders could not well have been more fair or handsome. 'Tell us what you want,' he said: 'dictate your terms. We believe in your hearts you are animated only by a desire for the welfare of the country; we believe that you possess the capacity, mental and otherwise, for contributing to that welfare. If you like to form a Government yourselves, we will support you. If, on the other hand, you wish for our personal co-operation in that Government, we will give it you. If there are persons to whom you object and with whom you do not wish to serve, those persons will stand aside cheerfully.' And then he went on, in a passage which those he so faithfully served ought not perhaps to overlook, to urge the formation of a new party. 'Do you not think,' he asked, 'that the time has arrived—and fully arrived—when we might seriously consider together how we might form a new political party in England? Do you not think that that party might be an essentially English party? I say English from no spirit of prejudice whatever. I mean a party which shall be essentially English in all those ideas of justice, of moderation, of freedom from prejudice and of resolution which are the peculiarities of the English race. Do you not think that such a party might be formed, which might combine all that is best of the politics of the Tory, the Whig or the Liberal?—combine them all, whether they be principles or whether they be men; and might not we call that party by a new name—might not we call it the party of the Union? Members of that party might be known as Unionists. Our opponents are the party of Separation, and they may be known as 'Separatists,' because they are a party who, in one form or another, would adopt a policy which would be equivalent to the restoration of the Heptarchy—a policy which would throw back our civilisation for centuries, and a policy which must inevitably destroy that great fabric of empire, which those centuries have laboriously erected. I ask you to answer that proposition seriously. Let us go in for a party of Union; and it is not only to be a party of union of the United Kingdom, but it is also to be a party which supports as its great and main and leading principle union with our colonies and union with our Indian Empire. I offer this without further elaboration to your most earnest attention, because I believe that it is only by the union of all the subjects of the Queen in all parts of the world and by the re-invigorated co-operation, cohesion and consolidation of all parts of the widely scattered British Empire that you can hope to restore to your commerce and to your industries their lost prosperity.'

Meanwhile the preparation of the Irish Bills was jealously guarded from the public eye. Rumours and reports of their character, and of the resistance they were encountering in the Cabinet, multi-

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plied and perished daily. Whigs and Moderate Liberals arraigned before anxious local associations defended themselves in one way or another from charges of 'insubordination' and 'lukewarmness.' Even those who had refused great office were subjected to severe examination. But while the agitation and excitement in the country mounted steadily, the proceedings in Parliament were tame and dull. 'Les jours se passent et se ressemblent,' wrote Lord Randolph. 'Waiting on the G.O.M. is weary work.' Radical resolutions in favour of Disestablishment and the abolition of the House of Lords failed to rouse the smallest interest. All debates on other than Irish subjects were unreal; and as the Government reasonably claimed sufficient time to present their policy in due form, discussion on Ireland degenerated into desultory skirmishing. A Scottish Crofters Bill and the colourless 'Cottage Budget' slipped easily through. An unrestful hush preceded the storm.

In this interval Lord Salisbury retired to the Riviera and Lord Randolph kept him supplied, as usual, with every kind of rumour, chaff, gossip and circumstantial information, which his wide and various acquaintanceship enabled him to collect. These chatty letters do not lend themselves to reproduction. They are too full of sharp phrases and personal confidences. But in the main they show only the utter uncertainty and confusion that reigned in the political world and how even to those best able to judge, much that seemed trivial, turned out to be true and important and much that looked substance, proved moonshine.

Lord Salisbury himself was far-sighted, but not sanguine. He was doubtful of a Whig coalition :—

> It was said of the Peelites of 1850 [he wrote on March 16] that they were always putting themselves up to auction and always buying themselves in. That seems to me the Whig idea at present. I do not think it is necessary to make any more advances to them. The next steps must come from them.
>
> I have great doubts about *your* being the impediment. I observe that Hartington, whenever he has the chance, dwells with so much conviction upon my 'rashness, &c.,' that I suspect I am more the difficulty than you. I believe the G.O.M., if he were driven to so frightful a dilemma, would rather work with me than with you; but that with Hartington it is the reverse.

And a fortnight later :—

> It does not seem to me possible that we should attempt to govern by a majority of which Hartington, Trevelyan and Chamberlain will be important parts. On the other hand, a dissolution by us, as a 'Government of Caretakers,' would be hazardous. It would give both the Chamberlain and Hartington sections an opportunity of wooing back their old supporters by abusing us on some point or other that is sure to arise and so escaping from the necessity of fighting the election campaign mainly on Home Rule. It would be much better for us that the dissolution should take place with Gladstone in power, and upon the Home Rule question. It will then be impossible for the three sections of Liberals to coalesce against us, and the moderate men will be compelled to give us (at the election) some friendly guarantees. But Gladstone may, if he is beaten, decline

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either to dissolve or to go on. I see no hope of good Parliamentary government in England unless the right wing of the Liberals can be fused with the Tories on some basis which shall represent the average opinion of the whole mass. But I see little hope of it. The tendency to grouping, caused mainly by the exigencies of various cliques of supporters, is becoming irresistible.

. . . .

I doubt any popular stirring on this question. The instinctive feeling of an Englishman is to wish to get rid of an Irishman. We may gain as many votes as Parnell takes from us; I doubt more. Where we shall gain is in splitting up our opponents.

But in the last week of March the situation cleared and hardened. Descriptions more or less accurate and detailed of the Home Rule Bill and its companion measure had leaked out. The division in the Cabinet became open. Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Trevelyan had, it now appears, already wished to resign on the 16th. Mr. Gladstone persuaded them to remain, at any rate until the Irish proposals could be presented to his colleagues in a concrete form. On the 26th the Prime Minister faced his powerful lieutenant for the last time across the Cabinet table. The differences of opinion and mood were not to be reconciled or covered by verbal concessions, however ingenious. Even with goodwill on both sides they could not honestly have come to an agreement. And by this time personal goodwill had ceased to be the determining factor in the decisions of either. The resignations were announced forthwith. Persons were found, as is usual in such circumstances, to occupy rather than to fill their places. Together, in the ensuing five years, Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Chamberlain could have carried almost any measure of Liberal or Radical reform upon which they were resolved. The champion of Tory Democracy, the cautious leader of the Whigs, the astute Conservative general, would have resisted them in vain. But the separation proved as lasting as it was complete and the war declared upon March 26, 1886, did not cease until after Mr. Gladstone had finally retired from the political arena.

Ever since their reconciliation after the Aston Riots, Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Chamberlain had been good friends. The Radical leader had been the first to offer his congratulations upon the defeat of 'the old gang' in June 1885. He had discountenanced the opposition to Lord Randolph's re-election on taking office, and had been displeased that a contrary action should have been attributed to him. The bickerings and wranglings of the General Election in Birmingham had left their personal relations quite unaffected. They had fought with fairness, and even with courtesy in public speech, and without rancour of any kind. The friendship that existed between them was now to have an important bearing upon the course of events.

In various ways Lord Randolph Churchill was the only prominent man in the Conservative ranks with whom Mr. Chamberlain could easily deal. Lord Salisbury represented opposite ideas, and

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his antagonism had been so recent and marked that direct association was impossible, even in this great crisis. But Lord Randolph had been so roundly charged, both by his Conservative comrades and his regular opponents, with being 'a Radical in disguise,' and was, in fact, so far advanced on many questions, that Mr. Chamberlain could consort with him without embarrassment or flagrant incongruity. Lord Randolph therefore became a natural and indispensable link. The force of political circumstances was strengthened by personal predilection. Both men liked each other's company. Their moods and ways of looking at things—to some extent their methods—were not altogether dissimilar. Both were popular leaders drawing their strength from democracy. Both were bold, determined, outspoken and impulsive by nature. Both had been joined to their orthodox party colleagues by slender and uncertain bonds. So long as Chamberlain was a Minister, their communications were necessarily restricted; but as soon as he had resigned, he was free, and the two came together in close and cordial co-operation.

Mr. Chamberlain was not likely to be turned from his purpose by the difficulties and dangers of his position. The determination of such men is only aggravated by these elements. Their doubts are hardened into convictions at the whisper of compulsion. He had made up his mind, and he would certainly not have been bullied out of it. All sorts of ingenious and substantial alternatives occupied his imagination. An Irish National Assembly, sitting at Dublin, 'free to make bye-laws,' but 'subject to the authority' of Parliament—able to levy rates, but leaving 'the Queen's taxes to be settled at Westminster,' would not have driven him away. But on the main point he would not budge, any more than Mr. Gladstone. He would not on any account erect 'another sovereign authority similar to the Imperial Parliament.' Rather than consent thereto he would face political ruin. And, indeed, it might have come very near to that latter conclusion in the summer months of 1886.

Lord Randolph Churchill now set himself to work by every means in his power to make the path of such an ally easy and smooth. To bring 'the great Joe,' as he is so often called in the Churchill-Salisbury correspondence, into the main line of the Union party seemed to him, indeed, a worthy aspiration. He possessed in private life a personal attractiveness and a wonderful manner—at once courtly, frank and merry—which he did not by any means always display. Only his intimate friends saw his best side. He now exerted himself to comfort Mr. Chamberlain in the difficulties by which he was beset, and to make him feel, in the midst of so much anxiety, that he was not without generous friends in the Conservative party, who were ready to work with him in this great fight without conditions or explanations of any kind—without, indeed, one thought beyond the immediate overpowering issue of the hour. The two men dined together often; they

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The Ministerial resignations and the imminence of the Parliamentary crisis induced Lord Randolph to urge by telegraph Lord Salisbury's return. The latter was, however, not well enough to travel for several days and in the meanwhile his lieutenants were in much perplexity. Lord Randolph wrote to Lord Salisbury on March 29:—

> Joe's conversation last night was somewhat to this effect: He has separated from Gladstone on account of the question of keeping the Irish M.P.'s at Westminster. Chamberlain's Parliament or Council would be little more than a kind of central vestry, and the Irish M.P.'s would remain at Westminster as they now are. Gladstone's Parliament is a real Parliament, and contemplates the departure of the Irish M.P.'s. Chamberlain is very anxious, and cannot count for certain on Radical support. He is rather 'drawing a bow at a venture.' He is much exercised because G.O.M. will not let him make any explanation of his resignation until after he has introduced his Bill. Thus G.O.M. has the advantage of first bark. I am going to dine with Joe to-night at his house, *tête-à-tête,* and shall learn more. Last night there were too many others present for much close conversation. Caine, on being asked to stand for Barrow, made a *sine quâ non* that he was to oppose Home Rule, and the Barrow Liberals have accepted him on this platform. This is not without significance. Gladstone declares he will have a majority of 100; the Government Whips say 20; R—— says he will be beaten by 70.
>
> Joe told me he had not exchanged a word with John Morley for six weeks. Ashbourne was commenting last night on the fact that Archbishop Walsh had swallowed John Morley's atheism. 'Ah,' said Morris, 'John Morley spells

God with a small *g*; but he spells Gladstone with a big *G*, and that satisfies the Archbishop.'

I shall write to you again to-morrow and tell you what I hear to-night.

March 30.—I hope this will catch you before you leave Monte Carlo. I learnt a good deal from my friend Joe last night. Gladstone's scheme, when Chamberlain retired, was roughly to this effect: An Irish Parliament of one Chamber, with political powers equal to the constitution of Canada, controlling all sources of revenue, raising any taxes, with Ministers responsible to Irish Parliament. Some kind of shadowy veto reserved to Crown. No other guarantees or safeguards. The fiscal arrangement was to this effect: At present Ireland pays by taxation 8,000,000*l.* to Exchequer; of this England spends 4,000,000*l.* on expenses of Irish Government, and takes the balance towards service of debt, army and navy. In future Ireland is to pay 3,500,000*l.* to the Exchequer towards these three latter objects, and to pay for her Government as best she can.

The land scheme contemplated the issue of Consols to selling landlords at a rate which was the same all over Ireland, but which was to some extent influenced by the size of the holding. If everybody interested in land took advantage of the scheme simultaneously, the amount of Consols to be issued would be 220,000,000*l.*; but by various dodges this was not to take place, and the estimated gross issue of Consols was placed at 120,000,000*l.* On this advance Ireland would have to pay 3 per cent. interest and 1 per cent. sinking fund, or something over 4,000,000*l.* a year. So that the total payments to the Exchequer would be about what Ireland pays now—viz. 8,000,000*l.*—for which she would receive the land of Ireland and political independence. Chamberlain thought the whole scheme might be altered by the G.O.M. between last Friday and Thursday, 8th; but such it was in rough outline when he left them. Can you imagine twelve men in their senses silently swallowing such lunatic proposals?

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> Chamberlain said he could not support opposition to the introduction of this Bill; so that, I suppose, no such opposition will be pressed. He said that it was everything that the country should see the G.O.M. had had the fairest of fair play. He is going to reply to the G.O.M. on the 8th, and I could see he contemplates a smashing speech—in fact, a speech for dear life. . . . No doubt Chamberlain's defection has increased Hartington's numerical following, and it has also rather fluttered him, for fear he should be cut out by Chamberlain taking the lead. Chamberlain told me that there was not a chance of his ever serving in the same Cabinet with Goschen. This will make a reconstruction of the Liberal Government under Hartington impossible.

Political apprehension increased as the date for the declaration of the Irish policy drew near. This event, after various postponements, was finally fixed for April 8. Early in the month Lord Randolph persuaded Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Salisbury to meet. The Turf Club was the neutral ground selected. Thither Lord Salisbury repaired—not, as it appears, without trepidation and misgivings, and in the little dingy downstairs room where visitors are received, was begun that strange alliance afterwards so powerfully to affect the course of history. 'I was very anxious to see you to-day,' wrote Lord Randolph to Mr. Chamberlain on the 5th, 'but learn you are gone home. Your friends, of whom you have many, of whose existence you are not perhaps aware, are desperately anxious that in any reply which you may make to Gladstone on Thursday, you should not commit yourself to, or acknowledge the authorship of, any alternative scheme. It would be a very dangerous piece of manœuvring with such a skilful opponent as the G.O.M., and besides might scatter dissension among the allies without conciliating estranged Radicals or infuriated Irish. Don't be cross with me for troubling you. The situation is so critical for everybody that any genuine opinion is worth consideration.' 1886 ÆT. 37

And again later from the House of Commons:—

'My anxiety about Thursday forces me to write to you again to remind you, in case of forgetfulness among many other anxieties, that the Queen's consent to a detailed explanation of Cabinet proceedings is required, which consent I am informed on high authority must be asked for in a formal letter. . . . The G.O.M. is capable of trying to trip you up on any formality.'

Mr. Chamberlain replied on the 6th. He was vexed with Lord Hartington who had changed his mind about the arrangements of the debate and who now wished to follow Mr. Gladstone immediately. To this Mr. Chamberlain had assented, not without irritation. 'The whole matter,' he wrote, 'is rendered more uncertain by the fact that the permission from the Queen is curiously worded. It seems to preclude reference to Land Purchase; and as this is bound up with the scheme of Home Rule, I shall decline to say a word unless I am free to tell the whole story. I have written to Mr. Gladstone, but at present have no idea whether or when I shall speak.'

Lord Randolph answered :—

House of Commons : April 7, 1886.

I and my friends pressed very strongly on Hartington and his lot your indefeasible title to speak after G.O.M. if you chose to do so, and last evening they finally agreed to this. Now things are again in confusion . . . if we do not act symmetrically and in union, we shall all get muddled up. Lord H. tells me he is going to see you this evening. I want to see you first. Could you meet me at the Athenæum, and, if so, at what hour? Send reply by bearer to Carlton.

Lord Salisbury tells me G.O.M. has no right to prevent you from making a full explanation of your reasons for quitting H.M.'s service, and that if you write direct to H.M. and send it by special messenger he (Lord S.) is pretty certain she will give you leave, and you can snap your fingers at the G.O.M.

The irresolution and indecision of the Whigs is most baffling. I am certain Hartington means nothing but what is right and fair towards you, but you know there are one or two round him who are very jealous of you. Don't blame him, and if you see him this evening before I see you don't let him think you are riled with him.

We shall have a desperate fight with this artful G.O.M., and nothing will win but the wisdom of the serpent.

But in the meanwhile Mr. Chamberlain had abandoned all idea of speaking on the first day. The uncertainty as to whether the Bill had been changed or not seemed to him a good reason for delay. His doubts about the Land Bill had, moreover, been removed. 'Mr. Gladstone,' he writes (April 7), 'makes no objection to my referring to the Land scheme; so this difficulty will not arise.'

The debate was marshalled with the utmost care. Lord Randolph feared lest some trifle might make the mutual relations of his two powerful allies more difficult than they were already. He understood how easily vast consequences may in times of strain and emergency arise from personal matters. 1886 ÆT. 37

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

Turf Club, Piccadilly, W.: April 7, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—Hartington is to see Chamberlain to-night, and will let me know the result of the interview here about twelve this night.

He anticipates great difficulty with Chamberlain, because it appears now that he wants himself to move the adjournment on Thursday night, and that he may cut up very rough if again interfered with. Lord H. says if Joe refuses to give way on this point he (Lord H.) will not press it, and will decide to follow on immediately after the G.O.M.

I trust it may be arranged in accordance with my views, because, from my knowledge of the House of Commons under the Gladstone spell, if the angel Gabriel was to follow the G.O.M. to-morrow nobody would report him or care what he said; but by Friday morning all the glamour will have disappeared, and the Hartington brandy-and-soda will be relished as a remedy for the intoxication of the previous evening.

I have written to Chamberlain asking him to see me this evening before he sees Lord H.

I shall send you a line this evening about twelve in case anything of interest 'transpires.'

Yours most sincerely,

RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

April 7, later.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I had a long and most satisfactory interview with Chamberlain this evening. In consequence he met Lord H. in a friendly manner, and arranged as follows:

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that he (Joe) will move the adjournment on Thursday evening, and that Lord H. is to speak Friday, either before or after dinner—for preference before. Trevelyan will speak to-morrow. Lubbock and Lymington will also represent Whig impartiality and patriotism if required.

Therefore we have to find dinner-hour speakers, and Plunket as a ten o'clock man. The debate is to be carried into next week. If G.O.M. insists upon Monday for his Budget, Tuesday will be taken for Home Rule.

I hope you may approve of all this.

Yours most sincerely,
RANDOLPH S. C.

The famous 'Bill for the better government of Ireland,' after various delays, came before the House of Commons on April 8, and was expounded by the Prime Minister with his usual power and more than his usual restraint. The Chamber, crowded from floor to ceiling with persons of distinction and authority, the purlieus of Parliament invaded by an excited throng, reflected the anxiety of his opponents and enforced the memorable importance of the day. It was discovered that the Irish members had taken possession of many places on the Conservative benches above the gangway. The group of ex-Ministers, clustered together as if on an island, seemed surrounded on every side by the exultant cheers of their opponents. And as they listened to the oratory of their grand antagonist and to the loud applauses which were raised from all parts of the House, more than one heart sank at the onslaught which must now be met.

Mr. Chamberlain did not speak till the following afternoon. Lord Randolph's anxiety about the exact terms of the Royal permission was justified by the event. So soon as Mr. Chamberlain, in the course of his explanation, found it necessary to refer to the Land Bill, 'a very startling proposal, involving the issue of 120,000,000*l.* Consols,' Mr. Gladstone rose at once to remind 'his right honourable friend,' as he was always careful to call him, that the permission obtained from the Queen on his behalf had no relation whatever to the Land Bill, but referred to the Government of Ireland Bill alone. Mr. Chamberlain at once asserted that he had resigned on the Irish policy as expressed in the two Bills, and his explanation could not be complete unless he was allowed to refer to both. He asserted that he had asked the Prime Minister to obtain for him permission to read his letter of March 15, which dealt exclusively with the Land scheme, and that Mr. Gladstone had consented to this. The Prime Minister suavely observed that he could not recollect what letter was written to him on March 15, and that he had no power to extend the Queen's permission beyond the limits of the Government of Ireland Bill. The situation was painful and acute. Mr. Chamberlain found himself in a position of astonishing difficulty. Quite apart from the painful nature of a misunderstanding upon matters almost of personal honour between distinguished men who had hitherto belonged to the same party, his whole speech—the 'speech for dear life,' on which so much depended—must at every step in the argument be

1886 Æt. 37 interrupted, restricted and recast. In the hush of a great assembly, stirred by passions the fiercer that they were restrained, surrounded by political opponents and personal enemies, menaced by the rancorous attitude of the Nationalist members, and confronted by the greatest Parliamentarian of the age, the resigning Minister had to make up his mind whether to go on and defy the Prime Minister, whether to sit down at once and refuse to attempt a mutilated explanation, or whether to submit and say what could be said as well as possible. He chose the last, and he succeeded in delivering a speech of nearly an hour which proceeded by steps of close and sustained argument to a triumphant conclusion. Lord Randolph Churchill's admiration for this memorable personal and Parliamentary feat was boundless. 'By a supreme and unequalled effort,' he wrote at once, 'you have reasserted your position as leader of the Radical party, and on questions of Imperial policy you have gained the confidence of the country. I never heard anything better.'

In spite of all its unexpected restriction the speech of the resigning Minister had proved damaging to Bill and policy. But a more formidable shock was to follow. Mr. Chamberlain has been censured for having joined the Government of 1886 at all; and at the time, while passion was hot, he was freely accused of having joined it in order to wreck it. The letter which he had written to the Prime Minister before accepting office on January 30, asserting his opinions in perfectly unmistakable terms upon the Irish

Question, and the 'unlimited liberty of judgment and rejection' which Mr. Gladstone had formally accorded him, are in themselves a powerful defence of his action. But Lord Hartington, who had from the very first held aloof, occupied a far stronger position; and from that position, with the 'hereditary virtue of the whole House of Cavendish,' in his usual temper of sober integrity, and in that style of homely yet profound argument which has always influenced the English mind, he now delivered a tremendous blow. For a long Parliament he had led the Liberal Opposition; for almost a generation he had filled great office; on a hundred important occasions he had been the spokesman of a Government and a party, and yet until he sat down after his speech on the introduction of the Home Rule Bill, no one on either side of the House knew what he could do. Mr. Chamberlain could answer the Prime Minister, Lord Randolph could attack him and fight him, Mr. Goschen could rate him; but Lord Hartington on this occasion did that to Mr. Gladstone which no other living man could do, and which Disraeli himself had seldom done—he rebuked him.

Beside these speeches the rest of the debate, distinguished as it was by so much wit and vigour, lay somewhat in shadow. The Chief Secretary, as the living embodiment of the new Irish policy, was heard with the greatest attention when he closed the discussion for that evening. In arraigning the late Government for their bewildering changes of mood and action towards Ireland, he fastened upon Lord

1886 Randolph a sharp adaptation of a famous verse
Æt. 37 which was devoid neither of justice nor severity:—

Stiff in opinions, often in the wrong,
Was everything by turns, and nothing long,
And in the course of one revolving moon
Was green and orange, statesman and buffoon.

Lord Randolph, when he resumed the debate next day, chose, like a good general, other ground to fight upon than that selected by his adversary as suited to attack. He spoke with unusual moderation, paying many elaborate tributes to the Prime Minister's eloquence and glory, and dealing mainly, in laborious detail, with the fiscal and financial proposals of the Bill. He contrived, without actually applying the quotation, to remind the Chief Secretary of Grattan's description of a speech of Lord Clare. 'Great generosity of assertion, great thrift of argument, a turn to be offensive without the power to be severe—fury in the temper and famine in the phrase.' He kept his most effective retort till the end. Mr. Morley had suggested that the consequences of the rejection of the Bill might be an outbreak of crime and outrage in Ireland, and against those responsible for its defeat. Lord Randolph rejoined with force and dignity that such considerations ought not to influence the House. 'Are these new dangers? Have we never known of a "No Rent" Manifesto? Have we had no experience of dynamite explosions? The right honourable member for Bury can tell the House how we were providentially, and almost miraculously, preserved from an awful disaster. But the dynamiters—the people who were inculpated in these atrocities—are now undergoing what has been called a living death. . . . Then, sir, as to assassination. Assassination is one of the rarest incidents in modern political life. It used to be a common method of political warfare; but the growth and progress of civilisation has demonstrated its utter folly and inutility. A man in public life ought not to be deterred by the knowledge that by some mischance some day or other he might be the mark of a lunatic or criminal, any more than anybody contemplating a railway journey would be deterred by the fear of an accident.' All this was greatly approved. 'I think you must be quite satisfied,' wrote Lord Salisbury, 'that your care over your speech was not thrown away. Everybody acknowledges it to have been admirably judicious.' But Lord Randolph did not set much store by his effort. 'It appears,' he wrote to his wife, 'to have been rather a *succès d'estime* than anything else; but the Whigs were very grateful to me for not being abusive of the G.O.M. or violent.' And again to FitzGibbon: 'I fear you must have thought my speech dull, but I was under an apprehension of saying anything to hurt the susceptibilities of timorous Whigs and Radicals, which made me very ineffective.'

No division was taken upon the first reading out of consideration for these same susceptibilities, and the debate was terminated on the 13th by Mr. Gladstone in another great oration. The introduction of the Bill being thus formally agreed to by Parliament, 1886 ÆT. 37 the agitation in the country and the fusion of the opposing forces proceeded amain. On the next day a meeting was held in Her Majesty's Theatre, at which Lord Hartington appeared on the same platform as Lord Salisbury. The chair was taken by Lord Cowper, Mr. Gladstone's late Viceroy, and he was supported by such representative men as Mr. Smith, Mr. P. Rylands and Mr. Goschen. The great company who assembled, mainly Conservative in their character, had no difficulty in coming to agreement upon a resolution hostile to the measure. Lord Randolph Churchill, for reasons which do not appear, thought this demonstration, known to history as 'the Opera House meeting,' a mistake, and he describes it in his private letters as a 'piece of premature gush.' He was inclined to attach more importance to a private conclave of Whig Peers which was held two days later at Derby House, which he attended, and of which he kept a record. All Mr. Gladstone's Peers were present, there were scarcely any absentees and much practical business was settled. The Duke of Argyll and Lords Derby, Hartington, Camperdown, De Vesci, Ribblesdale and Selborne, all spoke. Lord Hartington explained that there was no question of a coalition. He said that nothing could exceed the loyalty and good faith of Lord Salisbury and the Tories. In his opinion they were fighting for the unity of the Empire, and not for personal advantage. He could not make any definite statement; but he told them they might take it for granted that the Tory party would loyally support all Unionist candidatures. The Lords were urged not to be afraid to use their influence upon local Liberal leaders; to tell the members that their seats would be unsafe if they supported the Bill; and to attend meetings, if possible, under Liberal auspices. If the Bill ever reached the House of Lords great efforts must be made to reject it unanimously. Meanwhile it was arranged that opposition to the measure was to be fanned by all imaginable means. The meeting separated in much enthusiasm and determination. 'The feeling against the whole policy,' wrote Lord Randolph to FitzGibbon the next day, 'grows steadily; it is an undercurrent which the outside public cannot detect.' 1886 ÆT. 37

Upon the Parliamentary tactics Lord Randolph had the clearest views:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Hartington.

April 14, 1886.

Dear Lord Hartington,—I hope you will not think me officious or presumptuous if I venture to urge upon you my views of the enormous desirability of your giving notice to-morrow of your intention to move the rejection of the Bill. Such a move will be the best answer to the event of last night and the logical result of the meeting this evening.

I cannot refrain from expressing the opinion that this Bill ought to be dealt with on its merits, quite apart from any Land Bill, and that delay in giving notice of rejection until after Friday would be open to misinterpretation.

There are many waverers. The only way, to my mind, of leading such persons is by resolute, prompt and decisive action.

Please forgive me for troubling you with these lines.

Yours very truly,

RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

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The second half of Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy—the Land Bill—was brought before Parliament on April 16. The Prime Minister had shown no apparent eagerness to make public this plan, and was credited by his opponents with intending to hold it back till after the Easter Recess, in order that the consideration of the Home Rule Bill might not be prejudiced and complicated. Any misgivings which he may have felt, were fully justified by the event. The measure was on all sides ill received. The landlords, whom it was meant to conciliate, would have nothing to do with it. Radicals disliked buying them out at such a price. Economists deplored the drain on national credit. The Irish members denounced the appointment of a Receiver-General. The Press, Metropolitan and provincial alike, was almost uniformly hostile. The Bill scarcely survived its birthday. No further progress was made or attempted with it in Parliament. It perished meanly, and its carcass was kept by enemies only in order to infect its companion.

The Easter holiday was a period of intense political activity. The Prime Minister must, of course, have known from the beginning that the Home Rule Bill would be thrown out in the Lords. The stakes were high. A direct conflict between the two Houses and a dissolution thereupon was an inevitable and perhaps an indispensable consequence of his policy. A defeat in the Commons would shield the Lords from the responsibility. They would not be concerned in any way. The issue would be confined to Home Rule alone, and democratic wrath could fall only upon the members of a representative assembly. It was therefore vital to Mr. Gladstone to secure the passage through the House of Commons of at least one of the two Bills, and every exertion was made by both sides to win the dissentients who held the fortunes of the struggle in balance.

The machinery of the Liberal party acted as machinery is intended to act. If the changes the leader of the party had proposed, had been twice as vast, and half as reasonable, it would have been equally obedient. If he had been an ordinary politician, instead of a great and famous man, he would, consciously or unconsciously, have controlled it still. Although Mr. Gladstone knew little of its ordinary workings, and would have been disquieted had he known more, it responded readily to his will. All its gigantic force began to grind up against the men who withstood him, and to it was added the fierce wave of enthusiasm that his magic drew from the Radical electorate. Nothing availed his opponents within their own party. Long, distinguished, faithful service, earnest agreement on all other subjects, the comradeship of battles scarcely ended, the chances of victories yet to come—all ceased to be worth consideration. Local Associations hastened to pass resolutions of confidence in the Prime Minister. To all members who were declared or reputed opponents of his measures—right or wrong—a hard and growing pressure was applied. Lord

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Hartington was required to explain his vote on the Jesse Collings amendment and his presence at the Opera House Meeting to the satisfaction of the Rossendale Liberal Council. 'I have retracted,' he said, 'no word of condemnation or censure which I have uttered in regard to Conservative policy; and in regard to any question which is at issue between Liberals and Conservatives outside this question of the future government of Ireland, I hold that I am as free and as uncommitted as I ever was. Much as I value the unity of the Liberal party, I value the unity of the British Empire much more, and I will not be prevented by any party consideration from doing what, in my opinion, may be best fitted to maintain that union.' Yet these brave, honest words from a representative so long trusted, preceded as they were by a letter from John Bright himself declaring that Lord Hartington's attitude was thoroughly consistent with true Liberalism, failed to win a vote of confidence, and the most that could be obtained from the Rossendale Liberals was an expression of thanks for their member's address.

The course of events in Birmingham was, for reasons some of which belong to this narrative, more remarkable. In all the arts of political warfare, especially in that which concerns the management of constituencies and electoral machinery, Mr. Chamberlain was unrivalled. The forces at his disposal were small; but he did not throw away a man or a chance. The introduction of the Land

Bill gave him the opportunity of reading his letter of March 15 which Mr. Gladstone had formerly denied him, and of making many damaging criticisms upon that measure. Yet the tone which he adopted was more friendly than had been generally expected and his closing words, in which he expressed a hope that the differences between him and the Prime Minister would not prove irreconcilable or lasting, were warmly cheered from the Liberal benches. Mr. Chamberlain has stated with the utmost frankness, in an interview with Mr. Barry O'Brien,[1] that his intention 'all the time' was to kill the Home Rule Bill. 'I was not opposed to the reform of the land laws. I was not opposed to Land Purchase. It was the right way to settle the Land Question. But there were many things in the Bill to which I was opposed on principle. My main object in attacking it, though, was to kill the Home Rule Bill. As soon as the Land Bill was out of the way, I attacked the question of the exclusion of the Irish members. I used that point to show the absurdity of the whole scheme.' The belief in an accommodation was therefore baseless, and neither Mr. Chamberlain nor the Prime Minister could share the hopes of their followers.

The war on both sides was fair and fierce. Mr. Chamberlain was throughout at heart uncompromising; but he practised a conciliatory manner so that he might carry Birmingham with him.

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[1] At the Colonial Office, February 15, 1898 (O'Brien's *Life of Parnell*, chap. xix. vol. ii.).

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The Prime Minister, on his part, was duly grateful for his ex-colleague's kindness; but he allowed the necessary preparations to go steadily forward for twisting from Mr. Chamberlain's hands the organisations, local and national, he had so long controlled. 'Gladstone,' wrote Lord Randolph to FitzGibbon on the morrow of the Land Bill debate, 'is pretending to make up to Joe, in order to pass his Bill; and Joe is pretending to make up to Gladstone, in order to throw out his Bill. Diamond cut diamond.'

On April 21 the Liberal 'Two Thousand' assembled in the Birmingham Town Hall to hear their member's explanations. The meeting, which densely crowded the building, had been organised by Mr. Schnadhorst, and the exertions of that astute person to obtain a vote favourable to the Prime Minister had been unremitting. The speaker was not slow to understand the dangerous blow by which he was threatened. He excelled himself. If speeches rarely turn votes in Parliament, it is otherwise in the country. The man himself, their fighting leader, their most distinguished fellow-citizen, appealing for support from his own people, using arguments which none could answer, with a skill which none could rival, was irresistible. Mr. Chamberlain turned the meeting. Some were moved by the hopes—which he was careful not to destroy—that, after all, there would be peace. Others resolved to share with him the fortunes of the struggle. They came to curse; they remained to bless. Before he had finished, it was evident that he had won. The officials on the platform saw themselves almost deserted. In vain they pleaded for delay, for an adjournment, for anything rather than a vote from an assembly so moved. But Chamberlain demanded an immediate decision, and the meeting thought his demand was just. By an overwhelming majority—it is said, with only two dissentients—they passed a resolution of 'unabated confidence' in their member, and later a resolution which, though courteously worded, was in effect a condemnation of the Land Bill.

On May 3 Mr. Gladstone published a manifesto practically declaring that the Land Bill was no longer an essential article of the Liberal faith, and that in the Home Rule Bill all questions of detail were subsidiary to the one vital principle—the establishment of a legislative body in Dublin empowered to make laws for Irish as distinguished from Imperial affairs. On paper this should have met Mr. Chamberlain's principal objections. Yet two days later, without waiting for any fresh declaration from him, the official Gladstonians carried at a special meeting of the National Liberal Federation a series of resolutions pledging that body—upon which Mr. Chamberlain's influence had hitherto been supreme—to an unconditional support of the Government. The policy of making diplomatic concessions while fleets and armies are moving into advantageous positions, seldom leads to peace, and Parliament met after the Easter Recess more confused and divided than ever before.

The Second Reading of the Home Rule Bill had been fixed for May 6, the anniversary, as Lord Randolph Churchill lost no time in pointing out, of the Phœnix Park murders. It was postponed until the 10th, and on that day began the protracted and memorable debate that ended the Parliament and shattered the Liberal party. Up to the time when the Land Bill was introduced Ministers believed that they would certainly carry Home Rule through the House of Commons. But day by day the Parliamentary situation grew darker. Lord Hartington moved the rejection of the Bill in an impressive speech. Fifty-two Liberal and Radical members met Mr. Chamberlain on the 12th to concert resistance and request him to negotiate no longer. Sixty-four, including thirty-two who had been at the former meeting, assembled at Devonshire House on the 14th. By the 18th Lord Hartington felt himself strong enough to make at Bradford declarations which foreshadowed a hostile vote. On the 22nd the National Liberal Union was formed of the principal Liberal dissentients all over the country; while in Birmingham Mr. Chamberlain actually created an entirely new democratic caucus of his own, to replace the organisation which Mr. Schnadhorst had wrested from him.

But at the last moment everything came near being thrown into the melting-pot again. On May 27 Mr. Gladstone called a meeting of the Liberals at the Foreign Office. Above 260 members attended. The proceedings were harmonious, and the speech of the Prime Minister most conciliatory. He said that the Government desired by a vote on the Second Reading no more than to establish the principle of the measure, which was the creation in Ireland of a legislative body for the management of affairs exclusively and specifically Irish. If the Second Reading were affirmed, no further steps would be taken for passing the measure that session; it would be withdrawn, and could be proceeded with in an autumn session, or reintroduced in a new session with the clauses which presented most difficulty remodelled or reconstructed. Moreover, a vote for the Second Reading of the Irish Government Bill given by an independent member, left the giver absolutely free as to his vote on the Land Purchase Bill.

The plan was at once practical and alluring. The House was invited to pass little more than an abstract resolution. The controversy of the Land Bill was put aside; many of the controversies of the Home Rule Bill would be relegated to the Committee stage. Yet, once the Second Reading was passed, the Government would be immensely strengthened. A great decision favourable to them would have been taken by Parliament. Above all, there would be delay. Time would be secured to the Government to win back their followers by blandishments and concessions, as well as by the pressure of local organisations. Time was offered to the waverer and the weakling—and among all the plain men jostled and buffeted in this fierce contention there were many such—to put off the evil and momentous hour of decision and to cling for a while to a middle course. Time, too, would be at work among the slender new-formed Unionist alliances. Was it strange that the rank and file of the Liberal party should welcome this easy yet honourable escape and certain respite amid alternatives so full of hazard?

The dangerous character of this manœuvre, not less than its extreme ingenuity, was patent to the Unionist leaders. The Whigs were embarrassed and perplexed, and Mr. Chamberlain's position became one of aggravated and peculiar difficulty. On all sides forces laboriously accumulated threatened to dissolve. In this crisis Lord Randolph Churchill's instinct and resolution were decisive. One course opened perfectly clear and distinct before him. A hot debate must be forced at once and at all costs in the House of Commons. Mr. Gladstone must be stung into reply; and then, what with the taunts and interruptions of the Opposition and the powerful influence of the Irish audience—not represented at the Foreign Office meeting—he would in all probability be driven to a more uncompromising declaration. As soon as he came down to the House on Friday the 28th, he thrust this forward upon his colleagues on the Front Opposition Bench and urged that Smith or Beach should move the adjournment without delay. The others hesitated. The movers of the adjournment would be on very weak ground and possessed, as it seemed, but a slight and doubtful pretext. The skill of the Prime Minister in explanations soothing to all parties was measureless and unrivalled. A Parliamentary rebuff at such a moment might have the most serious consequences. But Lord Randolph clinched the matter.

At the conclusion of questions Sir Michael Hicks-Beach rose and invited the Prime Minister to declare definitely his intentions in regard to the Bill. Mr. Gladstone's reply was suave, and ended as follows: 'Reference must be made elsewhere before I proceed to give authoritative information to the House; but there is nothing at all improper in asking for that information, and on an early day I may be in a position to give it.' Forthwith Sir Michael Hicks-Beach asked leave to move the adjournment of the House, and in spite of the angry cries of 'No' which were raised by Ministerialists he handed to the Speaker a written notice of motion, which the Speaker somewhat doubtfully accepted. All the members on the Opposition benches and a few on the Government side of the House rose amid much cheering and some laughter in its support. Sir Michael then delivered a vigorous and provocative speech. Mr. Gladstone had said that the Bill was urgent: yet now it was to be postponed for five months. He had declared that the Government had a plan, that no one else had a plan, and that their plan held the field: yet now the House was asked to give an indefinite vote on some undefined principle of autonomy for Ireland, which might mean anything or nothing and was, in fact, a mere abstract resolution. If the Second Reading of the Bill were carried under conditions like that, it would

1886 be nothing more nor less than a 'Continuance in
ÆT. 37 Office Bill.'

This was all received with great Opposition cheering, and Mr. Gladstone laid aside the letter he was writing and rose to reply. He began in his most majestic manner. He was struck by the warmth of the speech to which they had listened. He would not imitate it. The imputation that the Government were considering their own continuance of office was one he would not condescend to discuss. That he left to the generous consideration of his countrymen. But as his speech proceeded, the cheers of his followers and the wealth and splendour of his language and ideas produced an exhilarating effect. 'We have before us a conflict in which we are prepared to go through to the end—(*loud cheers*)—and in which we are perfectly confident of the final issue. (*Renewed cheers.*) But we will not take our tactics from the Opposition.' (*Cheers.*) And then followed a passage which proved of momentous importance. 'The right honourable gentleman says that we are going to give an indefinite vote, and that the Bill is to be remodelled. I think that happy word is a pure invention. I am not aware that there is a shadow or shred of authority for any such statement.'

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Reconstructed.

MR. GLADSTONE: The noble lord says 'reconstructed' was the word. It is quite true that the word 'reconstructed' was used. (*Loud Opposition cheers and laughter.*) What confidence these gentlemen who use those means of opposition must have in the rectitude of their own cause and the far-seeing character of their own statesmanship! (*Cheers.*) The word 'reconstructed' was used. Does the noble lord dare to say it was used with respect to the Bill? 1886 ÆT. 37

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Yes.

MR. GLADSTONE: Never! Never! (*Cheers.*) It was used with respect to one particular clause of the Bill. This grand attack, founded upon the fact that our Bill was to be remodelled, therefore fails. What a woeful collapse! It is not the Bill that is to be remodelled, it appears, after all. (*Home Rule cheers and laughter.*) The noble lord spoke boldly of my speech, but now it turns out that he read it wrong. (*More laughter.*)

Seldom has rhetorical success been more dearly purchased. If Mr. Gladstone had made a lame and ineffective speech, if he had contrived to sit down leaving the impression that he was hesitating and uncertain, the course of history might have run very differently. The support of wavering friends might have been secured. A word would have reassured Parnell. The Second Reading might have been carried. But the very excellence of his arguments defeated his schemes and his uncompromising statements settled the fate of the Bill. 'Never! Never!' was the last word in the negotiations with the Liberal and Radical Unionists; it was the wrench which broke finally and for ever the many ties of sentiment and interest which bound them to their party: henceforth they looked back no more, and

1886 — ÆT. 37 strode forward into the future, anxious but not undecided.

Some realisation of the possible effect of his words seemed to come to the Minister after they were spoken, for he lapsed into ambiguity and reservations; 'and,' said he before sitting down, 'if we had made some great error in the management of this Bill, the right honourable gentleman would not have interposed to-day with his motion for adjournment, but would probably have sat with folded arms, delighted to see how we walked into some one of the many snares set for us.'

Lord Randolph Churchill followed in debate. It was not possible then to know how deep was the impression made upon the Liberal-Unionists by the uncompromising statements of the Prime Minister, and Lord Randolph, in a speech which provoked the occupants of the Treasury Bench, which many mistook for a mere taunting attack, but which was, in reality, a very adroit and skilful performance, endeavoured with no little success to extort from Mr. Gladstone and the Home Rulers repeated admissions that the division on the Second Reading was to be a real trial of strength and repeated denials that the Bill was to be dropped or reconstructed. To do this it was necessary to assert the contrary in an exaggerated form—yet without exciting suspicion; and anyone who may chance to read the speech from this point of view will discern the artifice lurking in every part. The offer which the Government made to the House was, he suggested, this: 'If you vote for the Second Reading of this Bill, we will withdraw the Bill, and you shall never hear of it again'; and when this excited protests he swiftly changed his ground and declared that the Prime Minister was speaking with two voices—'a voice to the Irish members that the Bill is not to be reconstructed—[*No!*]—a voice to the Liberals below the Gangway that it is to be reconstructed.' [*No! No!*] He asked Mr. Gladstone why he would not 'present a fair issue and stick to his guns,' adding, amid a storm of Ministerial wrath, 'we are being jockeyed.' Why was it necessary to delay the Bill? 'The right honourable gentleman says he has no time. Why has he no time? To whom is it principally due that this debate has been so protracted? Who refused to take it *de die in diem*? Who interposed every obstacle which Parliamentary experience and ingenuity could suggest? Why, sir, if it had not been for the obstacles interposed by the Prime Minister himself, we might have divided on this Bill a week ago. And what is the remedy? "The question," says the Prime Minister, "is very urgent. I still hold to the doctrine of extreme urgency; but we have no time to deal with it this summer and we will therefore put off further dealing with it till the end of the year." [*Mr. Gladstone dissented.*] The Prime Minister is very captious about dates. We will put off dealing with the Bill then to some period in the future marked out for us by those "limitations which are imposed upon us by the revolutions of the heavenly bodies." The right honourable gentleman

1886 Æt. 37 complains of want of time, and he says: "We will not send the Bill up to the House of Lords in August." Because why? Because the House of Lords will seek refuge in the excuse that they cannot consider the measure in the time at their disposal. [Mr. Gladstone: 'Hear! Hear!'] Sir, I dare say that the Prime Minister is far better acquainted with Peers than I am. He has made a great many of them—but whatever course the House of Lords may take will not, I am certain, be based upon such frivolous grounds as that, and I am perfectly convinced that he need not have the smallest fear whatever that the question of time will be raised. I have not a doubt about it that the decision of the House of Lords upon this Bill will be serious, calm, immediate and final.' After complaining that information should be given to one group of members at the Foreign Office and refused to the House of Commons as a whole, Lord Randolph proceeded: 'What has been the great bribe offered by the Prime Minister—a bribe as great as any offered at the time of the Act of Union? "If you vote for the Second Reading of a Bill which you do not approve of in your hearts and which you disbelieve in, I promise that at any rate for another twelve months you shall not be sent back to your constituencies." This is the noble policy of the right honourable gentleman, and the noble motives by which he appeals to Parliament: "Vote for anything you like; you are committed to nothing."'

Mr. Gladstone: Oh no.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: What? Then they are committed!

MR. GLADSTONE: Certainly.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: The Prime Minister surprises me. I did not think it possible to be surprised by him. Does he contend, from a Parliamentary point of view, that members by voting for the Second Reading of the Bill can be committed to the Bill if that Bill dies or is withdrawn?

MR. GLADSTONE: The principle of the Bill.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL: Never was such a view held in Parliament before. I venture to say never; and that is why the Prime Minister holds out to members the bribe that if they will only vote for the principle of the Bill, which they disapprove of, and which is going to be withdrawn and possibly never heard of again, he will consent to give them a little longer lease of political life. The manœuvres of the Government were such as might be expected from 'an old Parliamentary hand'; they were not those which statesmen like Lord Russell, Lord Althorp or Sir Robert Peel would have contemplated; and, having drawn forth one final demonstration from the Ministerial benches by protesting in a concluding sentence against this attempt to 'hocus' the House of Commons, Lord Randolph sat down well satisfied.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer rose to reply. In his most impressive style he undertook to administer a solemn rebuke for the use of such words as 'jockey' and 'hocus.' 'This, sir,' he said portentously, 'is the language of the Derby.' 'No,' retorted

1886 Lord Randolph across the table, in one of those penetrating half-whispers with which he so often riveted his hearers, 'it is the language of the Hoax.' It was some time before Sir William Harcourt was able to regain the serious attention of the House.

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The manœuvre had indeed been successful—but how successful could not yet be known. Mr. Chamberlain summoned a meeting of his followers for May 31, finally to determine whether to vote against the Bill or to abstain. 'Everything,' he wrote to Lord Randolph (May 29), 'turns on Monday's meeting'; and it is clear from his letter that he had not absolutely decided upon his course. He even states elaborately the reasons which made for abstention instead of a direct vote. Lord Randolph ventured upon a final appeal. He wrote:—

May 29, 1886.

I feel almost certain that if you remain as firm in the future as you have been in the past the Bill will be destroyed now; otherwise it will only be 'scotched,' and will wriggle about more venomous and mischievous than before. I think you must be satisfied with your decision to delay your meeting and your speech. I am sure that the greater bulk of your followers will stick to you, and stick to you with all the more admiration and fidelity, if you keep your foot down. Every day is showing more distinctly what madness it is to trust the G.O.M. . . . It seems to me that if you allow your party to give way, now that they know that the Bill in the autumn will not be a reconstructed Bill, but the same Bill, both you and your party will occupy a position of much humility, and you will have missed at the last moment the prize which was actually in your grasp. If you have any who are very weak about their seats let me know the names, and I will do my best to secure them from Tory opposition. But I do implore you to stick to your guns. . . . . You won't mind my troubling you with these lines.

All went well at the meeting. A letter from Mr. Bright is said to have turned the scale. Fifty-five gentlemen attended, and their resolve to vote against the Second Reading doomed the Bill. Radical Associations might assert their loyalty and support; democratic enthusiasm might rise to fever-heat in the country; but, so far as Parliament was concerned, the issue was settled. After this eventful interlude there was little left but to go to a division, and at the end of the next sitting Sir Michael Hicks-Beach announced that the Front Opposition Bench would take no more part in the debate. Yet the discussion was prolonged throughout another week, in the hopes that wavering rebels might return; and to that end every influence which the Government could employ, from the personal power and charm of the Minister to the discontent of local organisations, was sedulously employed.

At last the day of decision came. An anxious crowd hung about the precincts of Westminster. The House was packed in every part. A final sensation remained. Mr. Parnell had waited till the end of the debate and he had something in reserve which might well have shaken opinion. 'When the Tories were in office,' he said, in the course of one of his ablest speeches, 'we had reason to know that the Conservative party, if they should be successful at

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the polls, would have offered Ireland a statutory legislature with a right to protect her own industries, and that this would have been coupled with the settlement of the Irish Land Question on the basis of purchase, on a larger scale than that now proposed by the Prime Minister.'

Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, when his turn came to conclude the debate on behalf of the Conservatives, met this statement with the bluntest of denials. 'I must for myself and my colleagues,' he said, 'state in the plainest and most distinct terms that I utterly and categorically deny that the late Conservative Government ever had any such intention.' Parnell's answer was staggering. 'Does the right honourable gentleman mean to deny that that intention was communicated to me by one of his own colleagues—a Minister of the Crown?' 'Yes, sir, I do,' said the Leader of the Opposition at once; and then he added prudently, 'to the best of my knowledge and belief; and if any such statement was communicated by anyone to the honourable member, I am certain he had not the authority to make it.' 'Name! name!' cried the members imperiously in their excitement. 'Will the honourable member,' said Sir Michael, 'do us the pleasure to give the name to the House?' 'I shall be very glad,' replied Parnell, amid renewed cries of 'Name!' from all sides, 'to communicate the name of that colleague when I receive that colleague's permission to do so.' Every eye was turned upon Lord Randolph Churchill, sitting on the Front Opposition

Bench. But he remained gravely silent, twisting his moustache moodily. Not until Lord Carnarvon's explanations two days later in the House of Lords was he relieved from a suspicion so injurious to his character.

This was the end; and after it Mr. Gladstone brought this great debate to a close in a manner worthy of its memorable importance and surpassing all the fire and eloquence which had illumined its progress.

'I do not deny,' he said, 'that many are against us whom we should have expected to be for us. I do not deny that some whom we see against us have caused us by their conscientious action the bitterest disappointment. But you have power, you have wealth, you have rank, you have station, you have organisation, you have the place of power. What have we? We think that we have the people's heart; we believe and we know we have the promise of the harvest of the future. As to the people's heart, you may dispute it, and dispute it with perfect sincerity. Let that matter make its own proof. As to the harvest of the future, I doubt if you have so much confidence, and I believe that there is in the breast of many a man who means to vote against us to-night a profound misgiving, approaching even to a deep conviction, that the end will be as we foresee, and not as you—that the ebbing tide is with you, and the flowing tide is with us. Ireland stands at your bar, expectant, hopeful, almost suppliant. Her words are the words of truth and soberness. She asks a

1886 blessed oblivion of the past, and in that oblivion our
ÆT. 37 interest is deeper than even hers. My right hon. friend Mr. Goschen asks us to-night to abide by the traditions of which we are the heirs. What traditions? By the Irish tradition? Go into the length and breadth of the world, ransack the literature of all countries, find, if you can, a single voice, a single book—find, I would almost say, as much as a single newspaper article, unless the product of the day, in which the conduct of England towards Ireland is anywhere treated except with profound and bitter condemnation. Are these the traditions by which we are exhorted to stand? No, they are a sad exception to the glory of our country. They are a broad and black blot upon the pages of its history, and what we want to do is to stand by the traditions in which we are the heirs in all matters except our relations to Ireland, and to make our relations to Ireland conform to the other traditions of our country. So I hail the demand of Ireland for what I call a blessed oblivion of the past. She asks also a boon for the future; and that boon for the future, unless we are much mistaken, will be a boon to us in respect of honour no less than a boon to her in respect of happiness, prosperity and peace. Such, sir, is her prayer. Think, I beseech you—think well, think wisely, think not for a moment but for the years that are to come, before you reject this Bill.'

The House proceeded immediately to the division. A Whig and a Radical were named jointly tellers for the 'Noes.' The whole Conservative party with two exceptions—one because of divergence and the other through serious illness—passed into the Lobby. Yet such had been the strain of the conflict, so many the uncertainties, so powerful this last supreme appeal, that—pledges, agreements, careful calculations notwithstanding—the issue seemed to hang in the balance; and Lord Randolph Churchill, staring at the crowd as they shuffled by, thought them so shrunken that he loudly exclaimed: 'There are not three hundred men with us.' So great, indeed, was the excitement and apprehension that after they had quitted the Lobby scores of Unionist members, instead of going to their seats in the Chamber, remained massed about the doorway, eagerly counting with the tellers; and when the three hundred and thirty-sixth man was told, and it was certain that the Bill was rejected, such a shout went up as Parliament has seldom heard. The Government was defeated by 341 votes to 311.

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Like Sir Robert Peel forty years before, Mr. Gladstone must now face the spectacle, melancholy even to an opponent, of the break-up of a great party. Few were left to him of all that able band who in such good heart had joined his Government of 1880. Bright had parted from him; Forster was dead; Hartington and Goschen and James were gone; Chamberlain was a bitter and formidable foe. The Liberal party was shattered. The Whigs had marched away in a body. The Radicals were torn in twain. The Parliament so lately returned in his support had destroyed itself, almost before it had lived, rather than follow him further. His friends estranged, his

1886 enemies united, the faithful in jeopardy, the deserters
Æt. 37 confident; the wealth, the rank, the intellect of England embattled and arrayed against him; the Bill on which he had set his heart cast out by the House of Commons; what wonder, then, that this proud old man, feeling that the years were drawing to a close, yet remembering his triumphs and conscious of his power, should reach out for the sledge-hammer of democracy, and fiercely welcome the appeal to the people!

Parliament was dissolved on the twenty-seventh of June.

CHAPTER XIV

LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF COMMONS

'Solus imperantium Vespasianus mutatus in melius.'—TACITUS.

'It is an assured sign of a worthy and generous spirit whom honour amends.'—BACON.

THE General Election of 1886 surpassed, in the importance of the issue, in the confusion of parties and the sincerity of the combatants, any election since the first Reform Bill. Partisanship had grown rancorous during the eventful course of the controversy; rancour was fanned into passion by the excitement of decision; and to all was added the extra and unusual bitterness of a party split. The Liberal dissentients were brought at once to the uttermost wrench. Everywhere their own organisations turned against them. Everywhere they struck back with all their force. Everywhere they and the bold minority who stood by them, looked for the aid of their former opponents. The Conservative leaders, on their part, grudged nothing and neglected nothing that could contribute to the strength of the seceders. To every member who voted against the Bill, they had promised whole-hearted support; and such was their authority

1886 ÆT. 37 and the discipline of their followers that in nearly every case the local associations obeyed them. Tory candidates withdrew patriotically in favour of their late antagonists. Others were frowned and hustled from the field. Old comradeships and old prejudices faded together. Life-long friends drummed each other out of political clubs. Life-long opponents fought side by side. Home Rule was the one and vital test. The whole force of the machinery of the Liberal party—national and local—was used uncompromisingly. No Liberal-Unionist who could be attacked with any prospect of success, was spared. The purge was complete.

The Home Rulers entered upon the struggle in good hopes. They were assured of the obedience of the organisations. They saw the intense enthusiasm —'never before equalled'—of the Liberal and Radical masses. They counted vastly upon the Irish vote in the English boroughs; and, above all, they trusted in Mr. Gladstone's mighty personality. But the forces against them were tremendous. The statesman who would effect a revolution in Great Britain must not only persuade a party, he must convince the nation; and opposed to Mr. Gladstone were almost all the men whose names were widely known or had been long respected—John Bright, by himself a tower; Salisbury and Hartington; Beach and James and Goschen; Chamberlain and Churchill! All the protagonists of former conflicts were formed in one line of battle.

Lord Salisbury in the closing years of his life once said that Mr. Gladstone in struggling for Home

Rule, 'awakened the slumbering genius of Imperialism.' Beneath the threshold of domestic politics during the long years of Liberal prosperity the modern conception of Britain as a world-power, the heart of an Empire, the inheritor and guardian of a thousand years of sacrifice and valour, had lived and grown. It had been cherished by the somewhat tardy recognition of Lord Beaconsfield. It had been violently stimulated by the disastrous events of the Parliament of 1880. Although Lord Randolph Churchill was never what is nowadays called an Imperialist and always looked at home rather than abroad, his followers in the Tory Democracy were already alive with the new idea. A single touch sufficed to rouse it into a vital and dominant activity which for nearly twenty years has shaped the course of British history, and in spite of extravagances, puerilities and even turpitudes, has left a permanent imprint upon the national mind. It was this rising temper of opinion that Mr. Gladstone's Irish policy, embodied in his own majestic personality, seemed now to challenge directly.

The personal element was the keynote of Lord Randolph Churchill's address. That surprising document was made public on June 20 and as a specimen of savage political invective is not likely soon to be excelled.[1] It will no doubt be severely judged, now that nothing remains except the ashes of the great blaze of 1886. At the time many eminently respectable people who stood some distance from the actual fighting, as eminently respectable people are apt to do, were horribly shocked. Even Mr. Chamberlain was startled. 'Your manifesto,' he wrote, 'was "rather strong"; but I suppose the Tories like it.' But if the Tory candidates blushed when they read it in the morning paper, they did not forget to quote it at the evening meeting. Its jingles and its arguments—for it abounds equally in argument and in abuse—ran like wildfire along the skirmish lines. The working man laughed over them in his home and disputed with his mate upon them in the workshop. People remembered epithets who could remember nothing else and uttered taunts when other ammunition failed. One phrase at least, 'An old man in a hurry,' has become historic. If the address was vulgar, it was also popular. If it was reprobated, it was also used. The anger of that time has cooled, and its expression is worth preserving, though it may now provoke nothing worse than a smile.

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[1] Appendix V.

Lord Randolph spoke only twice during the election, for the exertions of the Session forced him to seek a rest. He visited Manchester on June 28 and, although he had been there often in the last three years, so great were the crowds that the traffic of the city was completely suspended while he made a triumphal progress through the streets. Two days later he addressed his own constituents in Paddington. His most important work, however, in the 1886 election lay in Birmingham, where only six months before he had led the Conservative attack against Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain. The Tory party in that city, by tremendous efforts, then first asserted itself as a political force; and, although beaten in every division, their minorities were well organised and enthusiastic and amounted in the aggregate to more than 20,000 voters. They did not easily forget that for years and years they had been kept by the Caucus and by the genius of Mr. Schnadhorst in a condition of political subjection. They had almost triumphed in 1885. The turn of events now threw their arch-enemies absolutely into their hands, and there were not wanting among their leaders those to whom the divided state of the Radical party offered the strongest temptations. It was fortunate for the Unionist cause that there was at hand an influence to which the whole Conservative party in Birmingham would readily respond.

Disagreeable speeches made by local politicians filled Mr. Chamberlain with anxiety, and the difficulty and isolation of his own position inclined him at first to take a gloomy view. Lord Randolph hurried down to Birmingham on June 19, and by his influence and that of Mr. Rowlands, the leader of the Conservative party in Birmingham, all difficulties were smoothed away. 'I have seen the Birmingham Tories to-day,' he wrote to Mr. Chamberlain (June 19). 'Henry Matthews has consented, after much pressing, to stand against Cook. We shall run no other candidate and shall give all our support to the Liberal-Unionists, asking for no return and making no boast or taunt.' This letter he signed 'Yours ever'—an unusual subscription with him. Again the same day: 'I will engage that all your Unionist candidates shall have the full support of our party. I have telegraphed to Rowlands to see me on Monday. Schnadhorst's only chance is that you should seem to be afraid of him. Why does not Mr. Bright intervene? I am looking forward most anxiously to the account of your meeting and speech to-night. I think there is a great deal of froth about the Gladstone proceedings, and all my information up to now makes me confident that the voting will be heavy against him. Don't get down-hearted.'

'Thanks to your intervention,' replied Mr. Chamberlain (June 20), 'matters look better here. The meeting last night was a tremendous success. Only fifty or one hundred dissentients out of 4,000, all electors marked off on register. This meeting will, I hope, have a great effect in other divisions, and I think we shall get Collings chosen in Bordesley. If so, we ought to carry seven Unionists for Birmingham. . . .'

'I was greatly relieved,' replied Lord Randolph (June 21), 'to see by your letter this morning that you were in better spirits. Your meeting was indeed a tremendous success, and your speech, as usual, most excellent. I hope my address has not given you a fit. I have only said what you and Hartington are longing to say, but dare not. . . . My own opinion is that we shall roll the old man over.'

So in the end it proved. The elections began on July 1, and from the very first the results were

disastrous to the Liberal party. The enthusiasm 1886
of the Liberal and Radical masses and the obedience ÆT. 37
of the organisations were unavailing. They sufficed only to drive from the Liberal ranks into irreconcilable opposition every man who would not accept the Irish policy. They were unable to secure a majority for Home Rule. They wrought havoc, but failed to achieve victory. The bulk of both parties voted in the ordinary way, according to their colours and their watchwords; but in every constituency men who had hitherto fought for the Liberal cause fought fiercely against it. The margin in many seats was so narrow that the resolute resistance of individuals and their adherents turned the scale. The dissentient Liberals with their personal following, supported by the whole Conservative vote, proved the most secure of any class of candidates. Of ninety-four who had voted on June 8, sixty-three were returned to the House of Commons. It had been asserted, and to some extent believed, that the Irish vote would turn the balance in forty constituencies. It was, however, discovered that the entire Irish vote in Great Britain could scarcely exceed 40,000 persons, of whom three-fourths were resident in London, Liverpool and Glasgow, while the remainder were too scattered to be effective. The great city of Birmingham returned a solid body of Unionists in the place of an equal number of Liberals elected in 1885. London became overwhelmingly Tory. The English and Welsh boroughs, which in the previous autumn had returned 118 Conservatives

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and 118 Liberals, now returned 169 Unionists and only 67 Liberals. The counties were not less remarkable. The 1885 election had returned 152 Liberals and 101 Conservatives; six months later the results showed 81 Liberals and 172 Unionists. Even in Scotland, Mr. Gladstone's stronghold, his immediate followers fell from 61 to 43. The British Gladstonians (191), with the Nationalists (85), were in a minority of 40 as compared with the Conservatives (316), without counting on either side the 78 dissentient Liberals who followed Lord Hartington or Mr. Chamberlain. The opponents of the Irish policy numbered 394, as against 276 in its favour, and the Unionist majority was therefore 118. Face to face with this decision, which in such a short space of time had altered—and altered, as it proved, for more than a generation—the whole complexion of the English constituencies, Mr. Gladstone did not linger. A Cabinet Council assembled on July 20 and formally decided to resign. The resignations of Ministers were accepted the next day, and Lord Salisbury was for the second time summoned by the Queen.

Lord Randolph, who was himself returned for Paddington by a majority of more than three to one,[1] did not wait for the results of the elections. While politicians crowded around the tape machines in the London clubs or harangued excited meetings in the country, he fled silently and swiftly abroad, and by a Norwegian river awaited the result without impatience or anxiety. To his wife he wrote:— 1886 ÆT. 37

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[1]
Lord Randolph Churchill . . .	2,576
Rev. J. Page Hopps	769

Torresdal: July 10, 1886.

It is certainly a tremendous journey up here. We arrived last Wednesday, at about eleven o'clock at night, after a very long drive, in carrioles, of seventy miles. We calculate we are about 1,500 miles from Connaught Place. I caught three fish on Thursday—12 lbs., 12 lbs., and 15 lbs.—and lost three; yesterday I killed three—20 lbs., 18 lbs., 20 lbs.—and lost one. The weather has been rainy and raw, but on the other hand we have no flies; I believe, if it is hot, the flies here are terrible. I have heard no election news since Tuesday, when things seemed to be going well. This is doing me a lot of good. I felt very seedy leaving London, and it took me some days to get right. . . . This is a most delightful spot, and very solitary; no tourists, no natives. The house, which is rough to look at, is comfortable enough inside, and Tommy is as amiable and charming as ever. On Saturday, by law, you may not fish after six in the evening till six on Sunday evening. It certainly is very curious having broad daylight at midnight. Fishing after dinner is very pleasant if the night is fine, and I am very glad to have seen this part of the world. . . . Post has just come in with telegrams from Moore and Rothschild. Certainly most satisfactory news, which confirms all my expectations. . . . I believe my address did no end of good, but, of course, no one in London will agree. I expect the Tories will now come in, and remain in some time. It seems to me we want the 5,000*l.* a year badly. But really we must retrench. I cannot understand how we get through so much money. . . .

From Norwegian delights he was soon recalled to the business of Cabinet-making.

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Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Justice FitzGibbon.

Very private. 2 Connaught Place, W.: July 25, 1886.

It was very pleasant to me to find on my return yesterday morning your very interesting letter. I showed it to Smith and Beach, who were much impressed. Things at the present moment are chaotic, and will not commence to resolve themselves into order until Lord S. returns from Osborne to-morrow.

Hartington and Co. definitely decline to join us, but will be the most efficient buttress. They mean to have their own Whips and their own organisation and probably will sit below the gangway on the Ministerial side of the House. If we play our cards well, we ought to remain in office for a long time. I am much in favour myself of the immediate resumption of the policy of January 26, and going on at once with the remaining business of the Session, instead of waiting till October. It will be a big fence to clear, but the horse is fresh; and, once cleared, the government of Ireland would be much simplified.

I fear the 'periplus' is very doubtful this year, and might have to be undertaken under the auspices of the R. I. Constabulary assisted by Scotland Yard. Possibly Londonderry will become Lord-Lieutenant. All this, besides being very doubtful, is quite secret.

Lord Salisbury accepted the commission from the Queen in 1886, with leave to resign it, if necessary, to Lord Hartington. Forthwith he strongly pressed the leader of the Whigs to form a Government and assured him, if he did so, of Conservative support. Lord Hartington knew that any Government he could form, would be practically Conservative in its composition, and must be called by that name. He believed that in these circumstances the Liberal-Unionist party would dissolve, Mr. Chamberlain and the Radical section splitting off and probably rejoining the Liberals. He therefore declined; but the fact that the offer had been fairly made placed him in much closer relation with Lord Salisbury and seemed to secure for a Conservative Administration definite assurances of Whig and Liberal-Unionist support. Lord Salisbury, having explained these proceedings to the satisfaction of a meeting of his party at the Carlton Club, then proceeded to form a regular Conservative Ministry. As is usual on these occasions, every rumour found its believers and every conceivable appointment had its advocates. Lord Randolph was variously named for the Indian, the Irish and the Foreign Secretaryships. It was also spitefully suggested in many newspapers that an intrigue in his interests was on foot to eject Sir Michael Hicks-Beach from the Leadership of the House of Commons.

After the meeting at the Carlton Lord Salisbury sent for Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Lord Randolph Churchill. 'I declined,' wrote Sir Michael Hicks-Beach in after years, 'to continue Leader of the House of Commons. I felt that Lord Randolph Churchill was superior in eloquence, ability and influence to myself; that the position of Leader in name, but not in fact, would be intolerable; and that it was better for the party and the country that the Leader in fact should be Leader also in name. Lord

Salisbury very strongly pressed me to remain, saying that character was of most importance, and quoting Lord Althorp as an instance; but I insisted. I had very great difficulty in persuading Lord Randolph to agree. I spent more than half an hour with him in the Committee Room of the Carlton before I could persuade him, and I was much struck by the hesitation he showed on account of what he said was his youth and inexperience in taking the position. He insisted on my going to Ireland, pointing out that I could only honourably give up the Leadership by taking what was at the moment the most difficult position in the Government.' The matter was arranged accordingly, and Lord Randolph became in addition Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Leadership of the House of Commons having been settled, other appointments proceeded rapidly. Lord Randolph secured the appointment of Mr. Henry Matthews to the Home Office. Mr. Raikes took the Post Office 'with a growl.' Mr. Chaplin indignantly declined the Presidency of the Local Government Board[1] because the offer was unaccompanied by a seat in the Cabinet; and Lord Salisbury, having consulted with Lord Randolph, appointed Mr. Ritchie to that office. Mr. Chaplin received from the Chancellor of the Exchequer a fatherly letter of remonstrance, written more in sorrow than in anger, which he may have read over with satisfaction by the light of subsequent events. One letter on these delicate matters may, perhaps, be printed without impropriety:— 1886 Æt. 37

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[1] Wrongly stated in the *Annual Register* of 1886 as the Board of Trade.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

2 Connaught Place, W.: July 30, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—Your letter received this morning contains so much good news that I am encouraged to press you very earnestly to consider—if possible, favourably—the arrangement of Stanhope for India, Holland for the Colonies, with Gorst as Education Minister. I feel certain that this arrangement would be agreeable to all your colleagues and encouraging to the party, while to the general public it gives an appearance of symmetry to the Government which the appointment of —— would hopelessly disfigure. . . .

I do not press Gorst for Education, because, if Stanley takes the Board of Trade, you may want to put Ritchie or Forwood at the Education Office; but I feel certain you would be pleased with the effect of Holland and Stanhope in the two high offices. In case you should wish to see me, I shall be in town until four o'clock this afternoon.

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Lord Randolph Churchill accepted the responsibilities of his high offices without elation. 'How long will your leadership last?' asked a Liberal friend. 'Six months' replied Lord Randolph gaily. 'And after that?' 'Westminster Abbey!' He had neither the time nor the inclination to dwell upon the many twists of fortune that had served him or the dangers and obstacles he had escaped. If he had cherished the ambition of leading a great party, he had not scrambled for place. He had driven Sir Stafford Northcote from the House of Commons, but he had not counted upon being his successor. He

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would have been perfectly content to serve under Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. He had fought fiercely and ruthlessly for his opinions and to have things settled as he thought they should be settled; but not consciously for his own interests. These had followed in the track of the fighting. His advancement had been the result, and not the reason, of his exertions. Real leaders of men do not come forward offering to lead. They show the way, and when it has been found to lead to victory they accept as a matter of course the allegiance of those who have followed. His personal ascendency was not the result of calculations. It was natural; and it was everywhere recognised, even by those who disliked and distrusted him—and that was a numerous band—as a fact ascertained and indisputable. It could not have been created by any process of scheming. Indeed, as this account has witnessed, he had more than once offered to stand aside to promote a coalition which must have excluded him for years from any chance of leading the House of Commons. He had lingered at his salmon-fishing, after the election was determined, in the expectation of a coalition and anxious not to disturb it.

It is easy to deal with men whose motive is self-interest. Others can cypher out the chances, too. The influence which Lord Randolph Churchill exerted upon the men with whom he came in closest contact, upon Lord Salisbury and upon Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, could never have been acquired by a self-seeker, however brilliantly endowed. A veil

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of the incalculable shrouded the workings of his complex nature. No one could tell what he would do, or by what motive, lofty or trivial, of conviction or caprice, of irritation or self-sacrifice, he would be governed; and in these good days of fortune the double fascination of mystery and success lent him an air of authority which neither irreverent language nor the impulsive frankness of youth could dispel. He became Leader of the House of Commons, not because he had schemed for it, nor because it was his right in lawful succession, not assuredly because the Conservatives loved him or felt they would be safe in his hands. He *was* the leader at that moment—natural, inevitable and, as it seemed, indispensable.

Yet the world, when confronted with the result, was astonished. No appointment—not all the appointments together—created such a stir of interest and dispute. Not only at home, but in Europe and in the United States, it was universally the subject of anxious or sympathetic comment. In the House of Commons, where men eye each other so narrowly and where capacity can be judged so exactly, the fact was accepted without demur. It was right, it seemed, that the prizes of that assembly should go to those who were in fact its leading spirits. The part he had played in the decision of the Home Rule battle had been unsurpassed in importance. He had never wavered. He had named the Unionist Party. He had been a principal agent in the electoral compact on which it was based. He was the link with

Chamberlain. His authority had roused Belfast and soothed Birmingham. His dexterous energy had foiled Mr. Gladstone's last attempt at compromise. Much, though not all, of this was understood by politicians.

To the Tory Democracy no news could be so good as his success. The English like to be governed by men they know. The working-class electors, who had voted at two rapidly succeeding elections against Mr. Gladstone, saw in Lord Randolph Churchill their favourite and champion. They recalled the disasters and depression of their party in the past and the political convulsion from which it had at length emerged. They saw it triumphant where it had lately been despised. They saw it united where it had lately been distracted; and, with what measure of reason the reader can judge, they attributed this revolution to Lord Randolph Churchill more than to any other man.

But other classes have to be considered in Great Britain besides politicians and working men. All sorts of persons of influence and station in their different spheres had been offended by the very process which had attracted the democracy. 'An insular people,' wrote Disraeli in 'Endymion,' 'subject to fogs and possessing a powerful middle class, requires grave statesmen.' And there were many who saw in Lord Randolph only an audacious fellow, whose methods were shocking to serious folk, whose violence impaired the dignity of public life and whose headlong career seemed strewn with the wreckage of overturned authority. How, they asked, was such an impatient person to endure the vexations of a Parliamentary session? How could a young man of thirty-six possess or obtain the knowledge necessary to deal with the varieties of complicated questions upon which a Leader is required to pronounce? How was this spirit of strife and revolt to reconcile differences between colleagues and exact discipline from a party? How was the flagrant obstructionist of 1884 to direct the course of business in 1886? How was the writer of the letter to Lord Granville and the erstwhile leader of the Fourth Party to maintain the dignity and principles of Unionist and Imperial administration? To all these questionings an answer was found even in the very short time that remained.

Much was also said of his going to the Treasury. It is amusing to read, by the light of after days, the lectures, kindly yet severe, in which the *Times* sought to warn him against fiscal temptations. 'A Budget on ordinary lines, framed with the aid and advice of experienced permanent officials,' would alone avoid 'injurious innovations' and 'the raising of disquieting problems.' He was adjured to remember how utterly fatal to the Unionist alliance any departure from 'sound principles of finance, understood and acted upon by successive Administrations, Conservative as well as Liberal,' would inevitably prove. For the sake of the Liberal-Unionists, for the sake, at least, of Mr. Chamberlain, he must forbear. Other newspapers reminded him of his

1886 declarations in favour of economy. 'The first and Æt. 37 most vital interest of the nation,' he had said, 'is finance. Upon finance everything connected with government hinges. Good finance ensures good government and national prosperity; bad finance is the cause of inefficient government and national depression.' And, again: 'I should like to see the House of Commons devote one or even two entire sessions to nothing but finance. I should like to turn the House of Commons loose into our public departments on a voyage of discovery. I should like to see every one of our public departments rigorously inquired into by small Committees of about seven experienced and practical members of Parliament each. . . . I firmly believe that such an inquiry would demonstrate that those useful arrangements of economy of time, economy of labour and economy of money are absolutely unknown in our public departments.' How would all these fine opinions fare now that he was himself the Minister responsible? And the Liberal papers did not delay to prophesy 'his certain repudiation in office of every principle of economy and of that policy of inquiry which he had so eloquently professed in Opposition.' And that, again, was a matter which time would soon resolve.

One shrewd warning came from a friend. 'Can Goschen by any means whatever,' wrote Lord Justice FitzGibbon on July 27, 'be induced to take the Exchequer? I suppose you think me uncomplimentary in such a suggestion. I am not. Age and financial experience have immense weight in that post out-of-doors, and I confess I fear that you would bring down upon yourself a weight of hostility from the front, and would have a dead weight of jealousy from behind and beside you, that might make the place unbearable to yourself or so laborious that you could not stand it. Of course, if "the lead" must not be separated from the Exchequer, it can't be helped; but if I were you I would rather not be obliged to carry as Leader the financial reputation of the State in addition to the rest of the load. The English are your sheet-anchor, and finance is their pole-star; and a middle-aged commercial Chancellor would make them easy in their minds, when you could not.' Of this more anon.

The re-election of Mr. Matthews on his appointment to the Home Office caused various embarrassments in East Birmingham and elsewhere. His opponent, Mr. Alderman Cook, who had been defeated as a Gladstonian Liberal at the General Election, now promised to oppose anything like the Land Bill of the late Government, to insist upon the retention of the Irish members at Westminster and to grant to Ireland only a Parliament subordinate to the Parliament of the United Kingdom. Mr. Chamberlain was thus placed in a position of extreme difficulty, for it was clear that without his support the Home Secretary would probably be defeated; and yet how could Mr. Chamberlain oppose the Radical candidate who had almost exactly adopted his platform? Lord Randolph Churchill, however, put the

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greatest possible pressure upon him. 'The election of Matthews,' he wrote (August 7), 'is almost *vital* to me; and I feel sure, if other things are equal, you will stretch a point in my favour.' And again on the 9th: 'This much arises clear and plain out of all that is doubtful and dark in Birmingham politics. If Matthews wins, the credit goes to you; it is your victory. If he loses, it is Schnadhorst's victory, and a pretty hulla-balloo he will make.' Thus exhorted Mr. Chamberlain took a very definite and decided step forward. The Radical Unionists refused at his instance to support Mr. Cook, and the Home Secretary was ultimately returned unopposed. 'I am delighted,' wrote Lord Randolph (August 12). 'I expect the Midland Conservative Club will put up a statue to you, which I shall have to unveil.'

Mr. Matthews' appointment caused heart-burnings in another quarter.

The Secretary of the Scottish Protestant Alliance wrote in haste to Lord Randolph Churchill:—

> I have the honour to inform you that at a meeting in Glasgow yesterday of the directors of the Scottish Protestant Alliance the recent appointment of a Roman Catholic to the Cabinet office of Home Secretary was considered, when the following resolution was unanimously adopted: 'That as the Papacy claims universal supremacy over all Sovereigns and their subjects, as Roman Catholics can no longer render an undivided allegiance to Protestant Princes, and as the avowed aim of the Papacy is to reduce Britain to the subjection of the Vatican, this meeting protests against the elevation of Roman Catholics to positions of power and trust in the British Empire.'

The Chancellor of the Exchequer sent an answer without undue delay:—

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall: September 9.

Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter enclosing a copy of a resolution passed by the directors of the Scottish Protestant Alliance, and, in reply, to remark that I observe with astonishment and regret that, in this age of enlightenment and general toleration, persons professing to be educated and intelligent can arrive at conclusions so senseless and irrational as those which are set forth in the aforesaid resolution.

I am, Sir,
Yours faithfully,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

Of the two courses which lay open—to reassemble in October for an autumn session or to sit through August and obtain enough money at once to last till February—the Cabinet selected the second. In the interval necessitated by the re-election of Ministers the policy to be submitted to Parliament was settled.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Confidential. 10 Downing Street, Whitehall: August 20, 1886.

My dear Randolph,—It has occurred to me, thinking over the list of measures of private members you read to me this morning, that if we have to make up our Cabinet mind over all of them we shall have a great deal of trouble and possibly some friction. A difficulty arises specially in the case of the Peers. With these small measures the Peers can practically do what they like. But what they like may very often be inconvenient for the Cabinet to profess and act upon in the House of Commons. It may often happen that some of the followers, or even of the members, of the Government in the Commons could not, without offending their constituents, take the line which the Conservative Peers would naturally take, and which they will not be withheld from taking without a great deal of discontent. I want you to think whether the following *modus vivendi* might not be possible. Our position as a Ministry is very peculiar. We have not a majority except on certain vital questions. Might we not fairly say that we will only be responsible for the guidance of Parliament on the questions which we ourselves submit to it? All questions submitted by independent members, unless they affect our Executive action or the measures we have proposed, we shall treat as open questions, taking no collective responsibility for the decision of Parliament upon them. This is in the sense of Chamberlain's recommendation that we should have *no* vital questions. We cannot go quite as far as that, but it is sound advice up to a certain point. Open questions were much more common when I entered Parliament than they are now; but as we are entering again upon the period of precarious majorities the system will have to be resumed. Pray think of this. I see great difficulties if we have to decide, as a Government, on all the fads.

Yours very truly,
SALISBURY.

The new Parliament, having re-elected Mr. Peel Speaker on August 5, met for the transaction of business on the 19th. The Royal Speech briefly declared that the ordinary work of the year had been interrupted, 'in order that the sense of Her Majesty's people might be taken on certain important proposals with regard to the government of Ireland,' and that the result of that appeal had been 'to confirm the conclusion to which the late Parliament had come.' In view of the 'prolonged and exceptional labours' to which the members had been subjected, the Sovereign abstained from recommending any measures except those which were essential to the conduct of the public service during the remaining portion of the financial year. As, furthermore, the Chancellor of the Exchequer drily announced that 'for the convenience of honourable members' the Government would take on themselves the responsibility of putting down notices of opposition to all the private members' Bills and notices of motion which appeared on the order paper, the only task demanded of the House of Commons, was to terminate the provisional arrangements which had been made for Supply and to vote the remaining Estimates of the last Parliament.

The Address to the Crown was moved by Colonel King-Harman. Lord Randolph Churchill arranged that Mr. Maclean, the member for Oldham, who had formerly opposed him at such a critical moment on the Council of the National Union, should second it. Mr. Gladstone spoke with admirable temper, as not forgetting 'what is due to a Government which has just taken office.' But the interest of the assembly was concentrated upon the young Minister who had cut so swift and strange a path to power. When Lord Randolph rose, as Leader of the House, to follow Mr. Gladstone, an intense hush of expectancy and anxiety prevailed. In spite of all his skill and ease as a speaker, his nervousness was apparent. Mr. Smith dwells on it in a letter to his wife which has since been published. But he spoke with dignity and strength and his lucid, ordered statement left no feeling of inequality in the minds of those who had just listened to the greatest of Parliamentarians. Although the Irish were inclined to interrupt derisively, the

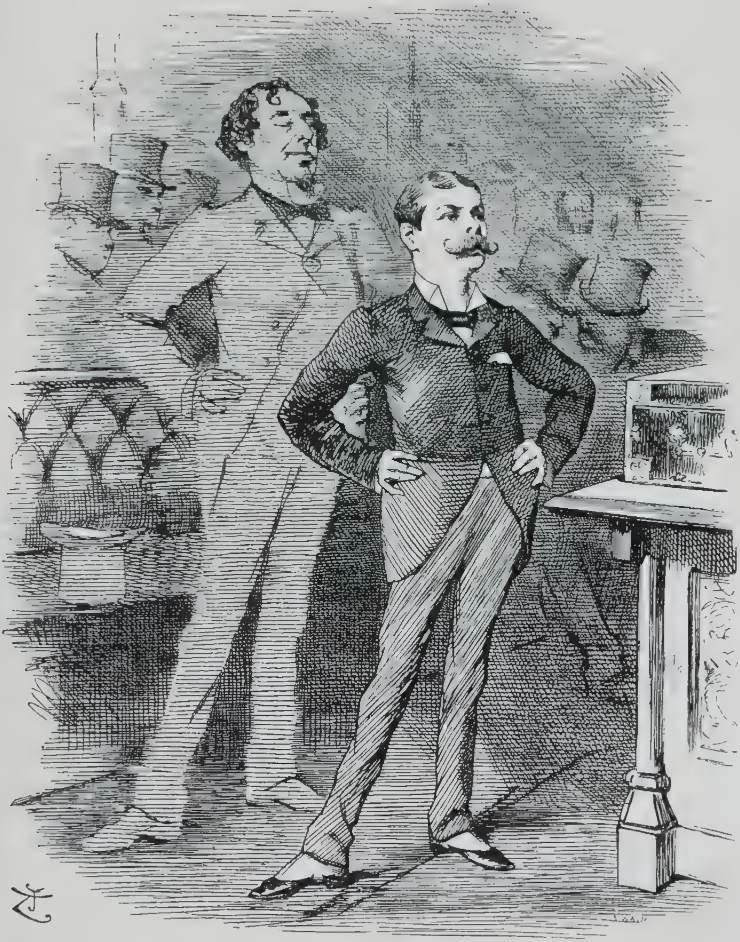
House was generally sympathetic; and loud and long were the Tory cheers when the speaker ended.

The policy towards Ireland which he declared, was definite and simple. It is the same policy which the reader will already have remarked in a memorandum to Lord Salisbury after the election of 1885, from which during the remainder of his life Lord Randolph never diverged either in one direction or the other. The Irish Question presented itself, he said, in three aspects—social order, the Land question and Local Government. The late Administration were of opinion that these three questions were indissolubly connected and their policy was to deal with them all by one measure. The new Government proposed to treat them to a very large extent as separate and distinct. The law was to be uncompromisingly maintained, whether against Orangemen in Belfast, which was still distracted by savage riots, or against Nationalists in Kerry, where a grave increase in 'Moonlighting' and boycotting had been recorded. Sir Redvers Buller would be sent forthwith to take all necessary measures. In regard to land—which subject a Royal Commission was also to examine—the Government would not encourage any extension of the principle of revision of rent by the direct interposition of the State; but would rather aim at the creation of a general system of single ownership by the influence and leverage of the credit of the State. The material resources of Ireland were to be developed after inquiry by grants from the British Exchequer in three distinct channels: first, the creation of a deep-sea fishing industry on the west coast of Ireland by the construction of harbours of refuge and the connection of those harbours with the main lines of rapid communication; secondly, the improvement and extension of the railway, light railway and tramway system; and, thirdly, the construction of those great arterial drainage works for the Shannon, the Bann, and the Barrow, which prosperous agriculture seemed to require, but which were far too considerable to be attempted by the resources of single localities.

Upon Local Government, decisive action would be taken. 'When Parliament reassembles at the beginning of February next, the Government are sanguine that they will be prepared with definite proposals on that large question. Their object will be, as far as possible, to eliminate party feelings and to secure for the consideration of the question as large an amount of Parliamentary co-operation as can be obtained; so that whatever settlement may be arrived at may not be regarded as a political triumph of either party, but rather in the nature of a final and lasting settlement. . . . The great sign-posts of our policy are equality, similarity and, if I may use such a word, simultaneity of treatment, so far as is practicable, in the development of a genuinely popular system of government in all the four countries which form the United Kingdom.' He ended by declaring in simple terms that the verdict of the constituencies for the maintenance of the Parliamentary Union must be considered final and irreversible.

Such was the policy which Lord Randolph Churchill was permitted to declare with the assent of the Prime Minister and of the Cabinet. In order that there might be no misunderstandings, he took the precaution of writing out the actual words and submitting them beforehand to the principal Ministers. It was the policy of his own heart. It is the policy which, in spite of some lamentable lapses, of many purposeless and vexatious delays and of more than one incident of prejudice or even tyranny, has upon the whole, as history records, been carried laboriously forward by Unionist Administrations during nearly twenty years and which in the end, whatever problems it has left unsolved, has notably advanced the social, political and economic stability of the Irish people.

Lord Randolph Churchill was much praised for his speech. The Conservatives were in high spirits, and the newspapers next morning emphasised the favourable impression which had been produced. Yet he does not seem himself to have been much affected by these tributes; for, on being asked the next day 'whether it is the intention of the Government to introduce any changes in the fiscal laws of the country by placing duties on imported manufactures, by taxing foreign corn, by countervailing bounties or in any other respect,' he replied, with an odd gleam of foresight or of humour: 'The ways and means for the year 1887–8 which the Government will propose to Parliament, will be communicated to the House on or about March 31 next by the person—whoever he



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THE GRAND YOUNG MAN.

SHADE OF 'DIZZY,' *loquitor*:

You stand—at your age—where I stood after years
Of waiting on Fortune and working on fools.
Not forty! Unwearied by failures or fears.
To him who can use them are ever the tools,
But there's an advantage you'll scarce understand
In having the tools ready shaped to your hand.

Punch, August 7, 1886.

may be—who at the time happens to be Chancellor of the Exchequer.'

The debate on the Address and its amendments was protracted. It had opened with much calmness; but as it progressed the smouldering fires of the great encounter began to sparkle. In this flicker the deep antagonisms which the election had made permanent between friends and parties, became visible. Lord Hartington's speech on the third night was uncompromising. Standing in the midst of his old colleagues on the Front Opposition Bench, with much formal courtesy and weighty argument he made it plain that he would exert his whole strength to sustain the Ministry in power. He was heard by his party in moody silence, broken from time to time by Irish interruptions and Tory applause. Mr. Parnell, who moved next day an amendment of his own, took pains to cast back disdainfully, as trash unworthy of notice, the material aid to Irish resources which the Chancellor of the Exchequer had proffered. He spoke of the 'dishonesty of bolstering up the system of landlord and tenant in Ireland by the expenditure of large sums of money the repayment of which is quite uncertain and highly problematic,' and of the 'folly of building harbours of refuge for fishing-boats that do not exist.' He derided the proposal to spend three-quarters of a million on the arterial drainage of the Bann and the Shannon, where nothing less than ten millions would suffice. Fed by such fuel, an ugly glow grew gradually in the House.

1886 ÆT. 37 The sixth day of the debate on the Address was stormy. It began with an unexpected motion for the adjournment of the House as a protest against the despatch of Sir Redvers Buller to Kerry. The member who moved it, Mr. Edward Russell, made an elaborate and indignant speech. He enlarged on the iniquity of employing a military officer accustomed to dealing with savage tribes to discharge duties which properly belonged to the civil magistrate. Lord Randolph dealt with this motion in a summary and even audacious manner. 'In the opinion of the honourable gentleman,' said the Chancellor of the Exchequer, 'the appointment of Sir Redvers Buller is a startling innovation in our Constitution, a serious blow to civil and religious liberty, a wilful invasion of the immutable principles of justice and other things of that serious kind. He holds strong opinions and he prophesies the most alarming results. He declares that all Kerry will immediately take an active part in the proceedings of the "Moonlighters" and that all Ireland will very shortly be involved in a general conflagration. Now, sir, I do not complain of the honourable member holding these opinions; they are opinions he is perfectly entitled to hold and to express. What I want the House to do is to compare the opinions he holds with the course he suggests. What is the course he proposes? He proposes that the House of Commons should immediately adjourn. What will be the effect of that course on Sir Redvers Buller or his appointment? Absolutely none. The House would adjourn, if they agreed with the honourable member, and, like the Emperor Titus, might exclaim that they had lost a day; but, before the House met again, Sir Redvers Buller would be well on his way to Kerry.

As to employing military officers in civil positions, had not Mr. Gladstone after the London riots appointed Sir Charles Warren, an officer on the active list, liable to be called away at any moment on military service, not to look after "Moonlighters," but after the civilised inhabitants of London? He suggested that the motion had been brought forward to delay the speech which Mr. Chamberlain who had obtained the adjournment on the previous night, was known to be about to deliver. No greater compliment could be paid to a member than that his opponents should show that they feared what he was going to say. 'I have to announce,' he concluded, 'that Her Majesty's Government entirely decline to take any part in the discussion.'

This was hard hitting, but it succeeded. 'Lord Randolph Churchill,' said the *Times* the next day, 'pricked the bubble with a Disraelian dexterity of touch.' Angry speeches in reply failed to sustain the debate. The fate of the motion was never for a moment doubtful and on a division it was rejected by a majority of 241 against 146.

The motion for the adjournment being thus brushed aside, the consideration of Mr. Parnell's amendment was resumed. The treatment accorded to Mr. Chamberlain's speech afforded some foundation for Lord Randolph's charge. He was repeatedly interrupted both from above and below the gangway. Mr. Speaker was invited to notice the smallest deviation from the strictest relevancy. Cries of fierce derision saluted him from the Irish benches. The men around him did not conceal their discontent. And in his turn he struck back with dexterous severity. Ceremonious language, much 'right honourable be-friending,' smoothly-turned sentences, soft, purring accents, ineradicable antagonism; such was his speech. It was the first of many similar episodes in this new Parliament. Yet some respect is due to the forbearance of the Liberal majority. For six weary years the Liberal-Unionist leaders sat on the Front Opposition Bench. Their followers held the balance of every division. Their authority sustained the Conservative Government. Their debating skill was always at hand when all else failed. They supported Coercion; they justified Mitchelstown; they even defended the Special Commission; and with decisive effect. Yet never once, not even at times of sharpest indignation, were they denied by those who surrounded them their freedom of debate.

The Government were naturally delighted at this decided support. 'You made a splendid speech last night,' wrote Lord Randolph to Mr. Chamberlain (August 27). 'It is curious, but true, that you have more effect on the Tory party than either Salisbury or myself. Many of them had great doubts about our policy till you spoke.'

On September 1, Mr. Sexton brought forward an amendment drawing attention to the Belfast riots, and this, of course, served as a convenient peg on which to fasten an almost interminable series of attacks upon Lord Randolph Churchill. At least twenty-five persons had been actually killed in the streets and many hundreds injured or arrested. All was attributed to the epigram 'Ulster will fight and Ulster will be right.' Sir Michael Hicks-Beach was able to make a good defence. In spite of a long and solemn denunciation from Sir William Harcourt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer remained silent; but the debate ran on, full of life and spite, until on September 3 Mr. Labouchere sought to provoke him by embodying a direct charge in a special amendment. 'Surely in vain the net is spread in the sight of any bird,' said Lord Randolph piously; 'and of all the unskilful and clumsy Parliamentary fowlers of whose manœuvres it has been my lot to be a witness, I never met a sorrier practitioner than the honourable member. In the various snares and wits and wiles with which he distinguished himself in the last Parliament he only succeeded in this—that he made himself the laughing-stock of the Parliament and of the public; and he appears to be desirous to add to-night to his already great reputation.' 'There was not,' the speaker declared, with some boldness, 'a shred of a shadow of a shade, or a shade of a shadow of a shred' of foundation for such charges. So the attacks were brushed contemptuously away, and the Government majority did not fail in the Lobby to endorse their Leader's disdain.

On September 3 the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved a resolution securing precedence for the Committee of Ways and Means and of Supply. So far as form was concerned, he based himself upon the precedent of 1841. But he ventured further upon an earnest yet restrained appeal to the House. 'We have pledged ourselves as a Government to produce at the meeting of Parliament next year such schemes of legislation as we may be able to decide upon and mature in the autumn and winter. If the proceedings of this session were to be greatly protracted and if the energies of members and Ministers were to be greatly exhausted by them, it would become very difficult for the Government to summon Parliament as early next year. I ask no consideration on behalf of the Government, but in the interests of Parliament and of the country. This motion is intended to wind up, with as much expedition as is reasonable and decent, the business of the session, and to allow members to separate in time for the annual recess. I would not for a moment wish the House to understand that I am advocating a rapid or slovenly discussion of the Estimates. I have always protested against that and always shall. I ask only that the House will concentrate its attention on the Estimates and proceed without unusual dilatoriness and loss of time. The difficulties which lie in the future before the Government, are very great indeed. No one can be more deeply impressed with their magnitude than my colleagues and myself; and certainly I see no possibility of arriving at anything like a solution of those difficulties unless the House is prepared to give a reasonable amount of time during which the Government may take thought for a future so anxious and grave.'

The effect of this appeal, conjoined as it was with a promise that Mr. Parnell should have an opportunity for bringing forward his Tenants' Relief Bill, was to induce the House to consent without a division to endow the Government with full control over public time. Lord Randolph, however, thought it proper to write a special letter of explanation to Lord Hartington, fearing apparently lest the Whig leader should become suspicious of any compact with the Nationalist party:—

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: September 5, 1886.

Dear Lord Hartington,—You will have observed in the papers that the Government gave a promise to Parnell to afford him facilities (*i.e.* a night) for laying his land proposals in the form of a Bill before Parliament.

Whether this promise was a wise one or not, I will not say. There were no doubt grave objections to any concession to Parnell of any sort or kind, but I think if you had been in the House last week you might have been of opinion that the objections to a course of stolid resistance on the part of the Government were perhaps greater.

However this may be I own that I am extremely anxious that (if possible) when the Bill does come on, the Government may receive your support in opposing it. Of course the Bill will only be Parnell's original amendment to the Address in another form, and the Government will not give way an inch to him under any consideration.

But Parnell has undoubtedly hopes, which if they are unsound cannot be too clearly and speedily demonstrated to be unsound, that he can make out a case so plausible for the tenants on the score of inability to pay that he may

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secure the support or at least the abstention of the Liberal Unionists; and of course if he were successful in this the moral strength of the Government would be seriously diminished, with corresponding disadvantage to other, greater and more common interests.

I therefore trouble you with these few lines now, though I do not suppose the discussion on the Bill can arise till next week at the earliest.

Believe me to be
Very faithfully yours,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

A friendly message emboldened the Minister to write more freely of his difficulties:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Hartington.

Private. September 13, 1886.

The position of this Government must always be most precarious. It may have a long life; but it is a rickety infant, requiring the most careful handling. The condition of the House of Commons, the recklessness and utter lack of all sense of responsibility on the part of the Opposition, their guerilla character and the want of a leader who can control, is most alarming. There is no precedent that I know of in our history of such a combination of ominous circumstances. I hear you are going to India; and if this means your absence from the House till March or April, I think it right to tell you that without your support in Parliament this Government cannot last. The assaults of an Opposition unrestrained by your presence will be too desperate for me to sustain. A state of great confusion will arise; the Government will go, and you will have to try your hand. I feel awfully alone in the House of Commons, and am glad to grasp an opportunity of placing things before you as I look at them.

Lord Hartington to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private.

Brantingham Thorpe, Brough, Yorkshire: September 14, 1886.

My dear Churchill,—I received your letter this morning before leaving London, and am glad to know so fully your opinions on the position in the House of Commons. It is quite true that I have some doubt, which I expressed to Sir M. Hicks-Beach, as to resisting the whole of Parnell's Bill. I do not think that you can leave expediency out of the question in dealing with the rights of Irish landlords. They have very few friends; and if they are encouraged to strain their rights, and if disorder could justly be put down to their account, they would have still fewer.

It is quite clear that the intention is to fight the Nationalist battle on the question of the land during next winter, and it will be to Parnell's advantage that there should be as many evictions as possible. Your best chance is that he will not succeed in inducing tenants who can pay to risk eviction. But if landlords evict wholesale tenants who cannot pay, he may succeed in getting up another very dangerous agitation. I thought, therefore, that this was to a great extent a question for the Irish Government, and if they considered a check on eviction necessary I should have been inclined to grant it. But, as I understand, they think that the Courts have already a considerable discretion which may be sufficient, and undoubtedly any concession to Parnell would do harm unless the evil of resistance is still greater.

I do not think that I misunderstood your action in giving Parnell a day for discussion of his Bill, though I do not know the exact reasons for the decision. But I certainly thought that, while you were quite right to keep your absolute freedom of action in regard to the Bill, you were not precluded from accepting any part of it which the Irish Government might on further consideration think necessary.

I shall always be very glad to communicate with you on Parliamentary matters when you think it desirable, and can very well understand the anxiety and responsibility of your position.

Yours very truly,
HARTINGTON.

The Address was disposed of in the first week of September and the House plunged at once into Supply. Forthwith obstruction became patent and flagrant. A select, determined and well-organised band, among whom Mr. Labouchere was the best known, took charge of national interests. They did not disdain trifles, however small; nor grudge study, however laborious. It was the last chance of a minority under the unreformed procedure. No Supply Rule, automatically fixing limits, regulated the votes. No Closure aided the Minister. The Committee debated to their hearts' content, and on after that till they were sick and weary. Business crawled forward on its belly in the small hours of the morning. Any attempt on the part of the Leader of the House to accelerate its passage was met by alternate motions to report progress and to adjourn. Lord Randolph was teased with mischievous satisfaction upon all the former manœuvres of the Fourth Party. It was a severe, if appropriate, expiation. Nothing but imperturbable temper and physical endurance availed. The Leader of the House was always in his place. He listened to all the discussions. He defended every detail of the Civil Service Estimates himself. On warlike stores, on public accounts, on salaries in the House of Lords, on secret service and town holdings and polluted rivers, on poor ratepayers and gold coinage, he was found suave, adroit, and well informed.

'The Chancellor of the Exchequer,' observed the *Times*, not always a friendly critic (September 17), 'is making great progress in the art of so answering questions as to keep the House in a good temper. This he does sometimes by judicious concessions, sometimes by a sly turn of humour, sometimes by a touch of good-natured irony.' Indeed, he used every Parliamentary art and all the resources of his many-sided character. Sometimes he coaxed and sometimes he complained. Sometimes he resisted with vehemence only to make surrender an hour or two later more valued. Once, as has been shown, he appealed earnestly and with success to the House. Once he rapped out that the tactics of the obstructionists were 'not conceived in the public interest,' and after an angry debate made a reconciliation with them and secured incidentally some progress. He knew the House in all its moods. He humoured it and offended it and soothed it again with practised deliberation. Yet he always appeared to be its servant. Ministers and Governments were but the respectful stewards of the public service. Parliament had rights and authority over them, to which, however capriciously asserted, they must bow. 'My own opinion,' he said when his attention was roughly drawn to a criticism of the Public Accounts Committee on some departmental practice, 'is that the

1886 Comptroller and Auditor-General and the Public
ÆT. 37 Accounts Committee, acting together, ought to be a superior authority to the Treasury; and that, if they distinctly lay down a rule as to the expenditure of money, it is the business of the Treasury to acknowledge that authority as superior to their own.' The member, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, who had complained, was so contented with this soft answer that, after congratulating the Chancellor of the Exchequer 'upon the breadth of view with which he always looks at matters of this kind,' he withdrew his motion for the reduction of the vote. Thus, inch by inch, Supply crept forward.

The Irish members watched Lord Randolph hourly. He and they had obstructed so often together that both sides knew enough of each other's ways not to be deceived by blandishments or manœuvres which would captivate the innocent spectator. Soured and indignant as they were—not unnaturally—by the turn of events, in their hearts they nourished a certain secret sympathy for the conqueror. They enjoyed seeing the game played scientifically, and they realised how different their new antagonist was from the prosaic authoritarians who chafe the hearts of Celtic peoples. At last the Estimates were done. 'It is due to the Chancellor of the Exchequer,' said the *Times* (September 16), 'to say that no Leader of the House of Commons in recent years has met obstruction, open and disguised, with more exemplary patience.'

The general satisfaction of the Conservative party at Lord Randolph's management of the House of Commons found expression in much solicitude for his health. 'Don't worry yourself and get knocked up,' wrote Mr. Chamberlain (September 1). 'I do not believe that the Irish will keep you sweltering very much longer.' 'You really must take more care of yourself,' Mr. Balfour insisted. 'Now that the main business of the Address is got over, I cannot see why you should spend so much time in your place in the House.' And Lord Salisbury on the 14th: 'I am afraid your work is getting intolerably hard. Don't sit up too much.'

'I am particularly commanded,' said Lord Iddesleigh, writing from Balmoral on the 16th, 'by the Queen to say that Her Majesty was greatly amused by the contents of your box last night. I suppose you won't understand this message without the gloss —there was a sprinkling of tobacco in it.

'Her Majesty is very sympathetic over the sufferings of our friends in the House of Commons. You have indeed a very hard task and it is not very clear how it is to be lightened.'

Only Mr. Parnell's Bill remained after the Estimates were passed. Two days (September 20 and 21) were occupied in its discussion. The Bill was badly drawn. Mr. Gladstone supported it in principle; but was forced to object to nearly every detail. Lord Hartington was severe in his condemnation. The Government declared they would have nothing whatever to do with it. Mr. Morley alone was fortunate in his advocacy. It was rejected

1886 Æt. 37 by 297 to 202. Ministers were much advantaged by having persuaded their opponents to expose themselves to the perils of constructive policies.

Lord Randolph Churchill ended the session amid golden opinions. Congratulations and goodwill flowed in upon him from all sides. He himself was in high spirits. 'You must find it very hard work,' said an admirer, 'leading the House and at the same time being at the Exchequer.' 'Not half such hard work as it was getting there,' was the droll answer. The party newspapers were loud in their praises. All doubts about his tact and patience were dispersed, and Conservative members hurried off to the country feeling that a great man had arisen among them, and that 'Elijah's mantle' had lighted upon no unworthy shoulders. The Sovereign wrote him an autograph letter of exceptional favour:—

Balmoral Castle: September 22, 1886.

Now that the session is just over, the Queen wishes to write and thank Lord Randolph Churchill for his regular and full and interesting reports of the debates in the House of Commons, which must have been most trying.

Lord Randolph has shown much skill and judgment in his leadership during this exceptional session of Parliament.

Difficulties abroad were soon added to the difficulties at home. At the end of August foreign affairs in Eastern Europe were suddenly plunged into crisis through the kidnapping of Prince Alexander by Bulgarian officers under Russian influence, and his consequent abdication. The Chanceries of Europe throbbed with excitement and apprehension. To Lord Randolph Churchill the news was specially unwelcome. He did not concern himself too much about Constantinople, and cared nothing at all for Turkey. The sentiments which had in 1878, induced him to write to Sir Charles Dilke, offering, if the Liberals would support him, to move a vote of censure upon Lord Beaconsfield's foreign policy, were unaltered. The freedom and independence of the Slav, Bulgarian and Hellenic peoples seemed to him still a wise and lofty object; but any sympathies which he had for stifled or struggling nationalities were strictly controlled. Great Britain should not shrink from her share in the responsibilities of Europe; but no duty of isolated intervention lay upon her. He had, moreover, been deeply impressed by the satisfactory manner in which the Afghan frontier dispute had been settled. He had become much more hopeful of a good understanding with Russia than when he had first gone to the India Office. Above all, he was resolved to offer no wanton provocation which might lead by Russian reprisals in Asia to the reopening of a question of such grave importance to the tranquillity of the Indian Empire.

The proceedings of the Foreign Office seriously disquieted him. As early as September 4 he wrote to Lord Salisbury: 'I have just read Lord Iddesleigh's telegram to Lascelles, telling him to prevent Alexander from abdicating and to cause him to appeal to the Great Powers. I think this is very unfair on Alexander. Iddesleigh knows perfectly

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well that the Great Powers won't move a finger, and he knows we cannot act outside a most Platonic range. I am afraid of our incurring moral responsibilities towards the Prince and his people which may lead us on far without previous calculation. . . . I do most earnestly trust that we may not be drifting into strong and marked action in the East of Europe. It will place us in great peril in the House of Commons, politically and financially.' And again on the 6th: 'Iddesleigh's last telegram to Lascelles is really *un peu trop fort*. I do think we ought to have an immediate Cabinet before such messages are sent. I look at the series together; the two first were startling, but recognised European concert, which the last altogether flings aside. W. H. Smith concurs strongly that the Cabinet ought to meet. Any moment it may leak out at Sofia that we are taking strong action. . . . Lord John Manners made a remark to me at 4.30 this afternoon symptomatic of surprise that there had been no Cabinet. As you know I loathe Cabinets, you will feel that this is disinterested; but I own to being frightened.' The Prime Minister consented to summon his colleagues, adding merely that he and Lord Iddesleigh were agreed as to the policy, but that the Cabinet could overrule them if it thought fit. The Cabinet, however, cleared the air and led to better understandings.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: September 15, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—Another desperate night in the H. of C. You may imagine how bad was the Irish conduct when Beach's last words to me were: 'I am now all for a strong Clôture.' . . .

M. de Staal has just been to see me. He declaimed against White. . . . I said that in view of our occupation of Egypt it was necessary that we should have a representative at Constantinople of character and resolution. He said the Bulgarians had done something or other rude to the Emperor's portrait at Sofia. He spoke of the great difficulty Russia had in coming to an understanding with Austria on account of the Hungarians, who thought of nothing but '49.' He tried to ascertain my views as to our interests in the Balkan territories; my reply was (speaking only for myself) that our chief interests were Egypt and India, and that anything which affected our interests in those countries would necessitate very strong action on our part. Speaking generally, I said that with Ireland on our hands, our foreign policy, except under great pressure, would naturally be pacific. He asked about the position of the Government. I told him that Gladstone was hopelessly out of it, and was no longer young enough to get into it again; that his principal supporters were hopelessly discredited and divided; that Hartington possessed great balancing influence, but could not look to forming a Government himself; that whether this particular Government lasted or no, power was with the Conservative party, whose political organisation and strength were increasing and improving every day; that such a fact as London returning forty-three Conservatives against four Gladstonians ought to have great weight with him in appreciating the Conservative position.

Finally, I hinted at an understanding with Russia by which she should give us real support in Egypt, abandon her

1886 — Æt. 37 pressure upon Afghanistan, in which case she might settle the Balkan matters as she would—or, rather, as she *could!*

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

A few days later Lord Salisbury was able to retire to his villa near Dieppe, although the situation still continued critical and obscure. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, delighted by Lord Salisbury's proposal to change the British Agent at Sofia, seems to have made great efforts to bring his opinions nearer to those of his chief. On the 23rd he reports an interview with Count Hatzfeldt. 'I told him that I had been thinking much over what had passed between us about the East of Europe, and that I had come to this conclusion as a member of the House of Commons and from a House of Commons point of view: Any anti-Russian policy which involved England taking the lead ostensibly on the side of Turkey, either about Bulgaria or even Constantinople, would probably place the Unionist party in great peril, might fail to receive the support of the constituencies, and would be savagely assaulted. An anti-Russian policy, however, in which Austria took the lead supported by Germany, we could, I thought, well fall in with, and hold our own easily in the House of Commons. He said: 'That is all very well; but what will be wanting, will be Germany's support of Austria. Our eyes are riveted on France.' I said, if that was really so, of course we could not play; but that it occurred to me that it was not impossible that if Germany and Austria took the lead against Russian advance and in defence of Bulgarian independence, and we followed and joined loyally and thoroughly, I thought that would seem to entail logically action on our part, diplomatic or otherwise, against France if she tried to be nasty. He seemed much interested by this, and I impressed upon him at parting not to forget that it must be to Germany's interest that the Unionist party and the Government should endure and remain strong; that foreign policy on our part which followed the lead of Germany and Austria would not try that strength too high, and might be carried far; but that foreign policy against Russia in the East of Europe which left the initiative to England would be a policy too dangerous, seeing the other great interests we had to defend, for us to contemplate. I told him these were mere House of Commons views, for his own private information for whatever they were worth, and that he was not to consider them in any other light. 1886 ÆT. 37

'I don't know whether you will think this expression shows any change of views from what I have expressed to you recently. I do not think it does really. . . .'

'If Russia attacked Constantinople,' wrote the Prime Minister in a letter approving generally of this discourse, 'and all the other Powers refused to intervene, I am rather disposed to the idea that we should have to act in the Dardanelles; but I hope the contingency is too improbable to require us to trouble about it.' The Chancellor of the

1886 — ÆT. 37 Exchequer replied meekly that he would be quite agreeable to 'a piratical seizure of Gallipoli.' 'There is,' he adds, 'a practical flavour about such a step which would commend it to the most Radical and peace-loving House of Commons.' Lord Salisbury detected a flavour of levity in this answer.

'You are naturally sarcastic,' he wrote on the 28th, 'on my Dardanelles, and I hope the matter will not come up in our time. But the possession by Russia of Constantinople will be an awkward piece of news for the Minister who receives it. The prestige effect on the Asiatic populations will be enormous, and I pity the English party that has this item on their record. They will share the fate of Lord North's party.

'At the same time I know the great military objections there are to the Dardanelles scheme.'

Further activity at the Foreign Office renewed the correspondence. On the 30th Lord Randolph wrote again urgently to the Prime Minister:—

> I have read with the utmost dismay Iddesleigh's telegram to Lascelles instructing him to inform the Bulgarian Government that our Government approve of the reply sent by them to the Russian Note.
>
> What is the reason for this apparently isolated and certainly most risky action? I cannot make out that an opinion was ever asked for directly, which makes such instructions all the more strange. Have we any right to express approval in so pointed and uncalled for a manner, without at the same time letting those poor Bulgarians know that beyond the merest diplomatic action we cannot go? I thought, when you told me some days ago that Lascelles was to be changed that that meant a modification of policy. I see no use in

changing the agent in this case, if the policy to which objection has been taken is to be even more accentuated.

Why cannot Iddesleigh consider the propriety of trying to act at Sofia in conjunction with the Austrian, German and Italian Governments, and, if joint action is for the moment impossible, abstaining from any action at all? We shall never get joint action while Iddesleigh keeps rushing in where Bismarck fears to tread. What I would like to see aimed at would be a Second Berlin Memorandum—this time addressed, not to Turkey, but to Russia, and England joining in. But all chance of such a document, which would imply irresistible forces, fades further and further into the distance.

Our action with Austria means war with Russia. Our action with Austria and Germany means peace. But I feel sure that our present niggling, meddling, intriguing, fussy policy is gaining for us the contempt and dislike of Bismarck every day. I do pray you to consider these matters. It was supposed that Lord Iddesleigh would act under your direction. I feel certain that much that he has done has been done on his own account. After all, it is very fine for him now; but the day of trial will come when all this has to be explained and defended in the House of Commons.

Now I have risked your wrath by inflicting this jeremiad upon you, but it is the last, for I go abroad Sunday and shall know no more till I return.

'Like you,' replied Lord Salisbury from Puys, on October 1, 'I am not happy about foreign affairs, but not entirely for the same reason. I do not wholly take your view about our attitude towards Russia. I consider the loss of Constantinople would be the ruin of our party and a heavy blow to the country: and therefore I am anxious to delay by all means Russia's advance to that goal. A pacific and economical policy is up to a certain point very

1886 wise: but it is evident that there is a point beyond which it is not wise either in a patriotic or
ÆT. 37 party sense—and the question is where we shall draw the line. I draw it at Constantinople. My belief is that the main strength of the Tory party, both in the richer and poorer classes, lies in its association with the honour of the country. It is quite true that if, in order to save that honour, we have to run into expense, we shall suffer as a party—that is human nature. But what I contend is, that we shall suffer as a party more—much more—if the loss of Constantinople stands on our record. . . . I am therefore rather uneasy about foreign affairs—for I am afraid you are prepared to give up Constantinople: and foreign Powers will be quick enough to find that divergence out. On the other hand I sympathise with you in some uneasiness as to the course of the Foreign Office. Many things, I fear, are not done—and I am disquieted at the result . . . . when I get back to England I may be able to exert a stronger influence.'

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: October 3, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I was not able to write yesterday and thank you for your letter, as I had to go down to Dartford.

You must not think that I in any way disagree from what you urge about Constantinople. It is only that I have a great doubt whether the particular method and scheme of policy which was carried out at the time of the Crimean War, and again to a great extent in 1876–78, is the best. I doubt whether the people will support that method; and it seems to have this enormous disadvantage, that it enables Austria to lie back.

We can, I think, perfectly defend Constantinople by going in for the independence of Bulgaria; and we can best obtain that independence by persuading Austria to take the lead.

But no doubt the proceedings of Lascelles, and the probable proceedings at Constantinople of Sir W. White, are more in accordance with the old policy, which I fear is now impracticable, than with a modification of that policy.

Please do not suspect me of indifference to a matter on which you feel so strongly. My only business and object are to bring, in the best way I can, any policy which you wish carried out into favour with the House of Commons and the constituencies, so far as it may be possible for me to influence either. You must remember that you have not spoken on these matters either in the Lords or the country, and I am only anxious that you should find a *terrain* well prepared.

I am off to-morrow night and out of reach of everybody till 23rd.

Lord Randolph Churchill's speech at Dartford (October 2) was probably the most important of his life. Upwards of twenty thousand Conservatives were gathered to receive him. Nearly a hundred addresses from all parts of the country were presented to him by deputations. The town was bright with flags by day and fireworks by night. Standing upon an improvised platform among the picturesque glades of Oakfield Park, and backed by the solid phalanx of Conservative members which Kent had returned to Parliament, the Chancellor of the Exchequer unfolded to an audience, variously computed at from twelve to fourteen thousand persons, the future

1886 legislative programme of the Government. He
ÆT. 37 extolled the loyalty of the Unionist Liberals. He reiterated the declarations upon Ireland which he had made to the House of Commons. In order that the Unionist party might legislate, as he described it, upon ascertained facts and not, like Mr. Gladstone, by intuition, he recounted the appointment of the four Royal Commissions on Irish Land, on Irish Development, on Currency and on Departmental Expenditure. He urged a complete reform of House of Commons procedure, including the institution of the Closure by a simple majority. He announced that the Government would introduce a Bill which should provide facilities, through the operation of local authorities, for the acquisition by the agricultural labourer of freehold plots and allotments of land. And in this connection he spoke gratefully of the pioneer work which Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Jesse Collings had performed. He held out the promise of an alteration in the law of tithe, so that payment should, in the first instance, be demanded of the landlord; and a threat to remodel railway rates so that the home producer should not be undercut by the foreigner. He mentioned a Land Bill for making the transfer of land easy and cheap; a broad reorganisation of Local Government with a new assessment and application of local taxation; and finally he said: 'I will not conceal from you that my own special object, to which I hope to devote whatever energy and strength or influence I may possess, is to endeavour to attain some genuine and considerable

reduction of public expenditure and consequent reduction of taxation. I shall be bitterly disappointed if it is not in my power after one year, or at any rate after two years, to show to the public that a very honest and a very earnest effort has been made in that direction.' Such was the Tory Democratic programme. Nor should it be supposed that these were the unauthorised views of a single Minister. All these legislative projects had received the consent of the Cabinet. Nearly all have since been passed by Conservative Administrations into law.

Then the speaker turned to foreign affairs, and here he contrived, without doing violence to his own convictions, to support faithfully and effectively in its general tenor Lord Salisbury's policy: but he used very different arguments from those which Conservative audiences were accustomed to applaud.

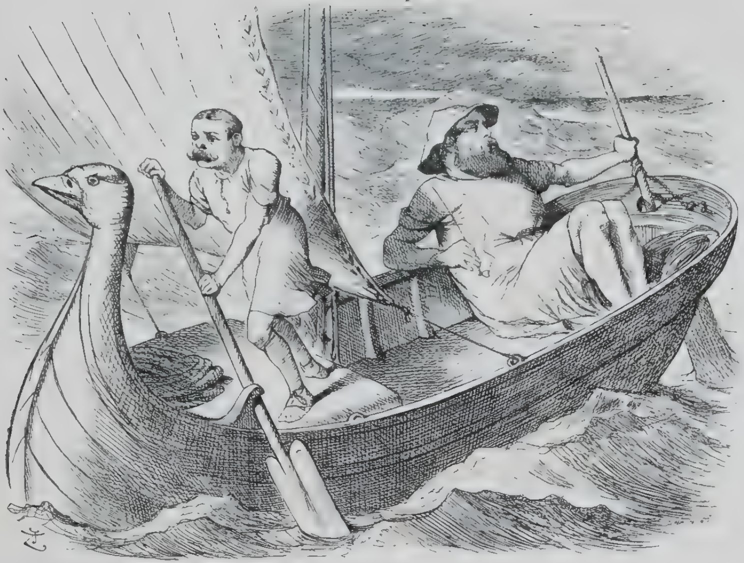
'We had every reason to hope,' he said, 'that the union of Eastern Roumelia with Bulgaria under the sovereignty of Prince Alexander would develop a prosperous and independent nation, in the growing strength of which might ultimately be found a peaceful and true solution of the Eastern Question. Those hopes have been for the moment to a great extent dashed. A brutal and cowardly conspiracy, consummated before the young community had had time to consolidate itself, was successful in this—that it paralysed the governing authority of the Prince and deprived Bulgaria of an honoured and trusted leader. The freedom and independence of

1886 Bulgaria, as well as of the kingdoms of Servia and Æt. 37 Roumania, would appear to be seriously compromised. It has been said by some, and even by persons of authority and influence, that in the issues which are involved England has no material interest. Such an assertion would appear to me to be far too loose and general. The sympathy of England with liberty and with the freedom and independence of communities and nationalities, is of ancient origin, and has become the traditional direction of our foreign policy. The policy based on this strong sympathy is not so purely sentimental as a careless critic might suppose. It would be more correct, indeed, to describe such a policy as particular, and, in a sense, as selfish; for the precious liberties which we enjoy, and the freedom of Europe from tyranny and despotism, are in reality indissolubly connected. To England Europe owes much of her modern popular freedom. It was mainly English effort which rescued Germany and the Netherlands from the despotism of King Philip of Spain, and after him from that of Louis XIV. of France. It was English effort which preserved the liberties of Europe from the desolating tyranny of Napoleon. In our own times our nation has done much, either by direct intervention or by energetic moral support, to establish upon firm foundations the freedom of Italy and of Greece. . . . A generation ago Germany and Austria were not so sensitive as they are now to the value of political liberty. Nor did they appreciate to its full extent the great stability of institutions which political liberty engenders; and on England devolved the duty—the honourable but dangerous duty—of setting an example and of leading the way. Those were the days of Lord Palmerston; but times have changed, and the freedom and the independence of the Danubian Principalities and of the Balkan nationalities are a primary and vital object in the policy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Those things being so, it may well be that England can honourably and safely afford to view with satisfaction that Power whose interests are most directly and vitally concerned, assuming the foremost part in this great international work. We must, of course, take it for granted, as I am doing, that the liberty-giving policy of the Treaty of Berlin will be carefully and watchfully protected. Whatever modification this great fact may enable us to make in our foreign policy, whatever diminution of isolated risk or sole responsibility this may enable us to effect, you may be certain of one thing—that there will be no sudden or violent departure by Her Majesty's present Government from those main principles of foreign policy which I have before alluded to, and which for nearly three centuries mark in strong, distinct and clear lines the course of the British Empire among the nations of the world.

There are Powers in Europe who earnestly and honestly desire to avoid war and to preserve peace, to content themselves with their possessions and their frontiers and to concentrate their energies on commercial progress and on domestic development. There are other Powers who do not appear to be

1886 — ÆT. 37 so fortunately situated, and who, from one cause or another which it is not necessary to analyse or examine, betray from time to time a regrettable tendency towards contentious and even aggressive action. It is the duty of any British Government to exhaust itself in efforts to maintain the best and the most friendly relations with all foreign States and to lose no opportunity of offering friendly and conciliatory counsels for the purpose of mitigating national rivalries and of peacefully solving international disputes. But should circumstances arise which, from their grave and dangerous nature, should force the Government of the Queen to make a choice, it cannot be doubted that the sympathy—and, if necessary, even the support—of England will be given to those Powers who seek the peace of Europe and the liberty of peoples, and in whose favour our timely adhesion would probably, and without the use of force, decide the issue.'

It would be hard to say whether this speech made more stir at home or abroad. For more than a week the declarations upon British foreign policy were the chief theme of the Continental press. And in Berlin, Vienna and Rome they received a measure of welcome which grew as their phrasing was more carefully examined. Lord Randolph's outspoken condemnation of the Bulgarian kidnapping conspiracy was declared to give a satisfaction to the moral feelings of Christendom which had been looked for in vain in the late utterances of European statesmen. The announcement that Great Britain would take her part in the work of preserving international



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'YOUTH ON THE PROW AND PLEASURE AT THE HELM!'

Punch, August 14, 1886.

peace, and that her influence would be exerted upon the side of the Central Powers—not for the sake of the old pro-Turkish policy, but in the name of the liberties of the Balkan peoples—was accepted with the utmost satisfaction in Berlin. The style of the declaration created an impression of calm authority; and 'Palmerston Redivivus' is an expression which repeatedly appears in the foreign despatches and articles of that time.

At home the Conservative party was too much astonished to give vent immediately to any effective opinion. The party newspapers generally applauded the proposals and tone of the speech as 'temperate, reasonable, and practical.' The *Times* observed that the programme in its scope and fulness 'recalled the palmy days of Mr. Gladstone.' The Opposition, with evident disgust, denounced the Chancellor of the Exchequer as 'an unscrupulous opportunist' who had stolen the policies of his Radical opponents and had calmly appropriated their famous motto of 'Peace, Retrenchment and Reform.' It was not until some days had passed that the perplexed anxiety in Tory circles found expression in grumblings that the Prime Minister was being effaced by his lieutenant. But even then no sign could be discerned in any quarter of a wish or intention to repudiate the policy declared.

From all this buzzing, friendly and unfriendly alike, Lord Randolph fled secretly and silently. For more than a week he was lost to the public eye. It was rumoured that he had passed through Paris and

Berlin on October 7; but it was not until the 12th that 'Mr. Spencer,' an English tourist, who with his friend Mr. Trafford had been looking at picture galleries, museums and theatres at Dresden and Prague, was identified with the orator of Dartford.

Few things were more remarkable in Lord Randolph Churchill's brief career than the quickness with which he acquired a European reputation. All over the Continent he was already regarded as the future master of English politics. The tension in the East was unrelieved and the diplomatic skies were grey and shifting. Here was the second personage in the British Cabinet, fresh from a most important public statement, travelling *incognito* through Germany and Austria. What had he done in his passage through Berlin? Had he a mission to Bismarck? Had he been to Varzin or not? From this moment his movements were watched with the most minute and provoking curiosity and the fullest details were telegraphed to every capital. The press revived memories of Gambetta's journey to Frankfort, and perhaps beyond, two years before his death. We learn from the foreign intelligence of the *Times* of October 13 that 'Mr. Spencer' and Mr. Trafford, 'the two travellers whose every step is watched by the European press,' have been 'residing at the Imperial Hotel [Vienna] since yesterday.' They had been received by a crowd at the station, and several persons who had seen Lord Randolph Churchill in England had 'maintained most positively' that 'Mr. Spencer' was identical with the Chancellor of the

Exchequer. We are told that 'Mr. Spencer' looked somewhat fatigued, and retired to rest after telling the landlord 'in emphatic terms' that he had come to Vienna for nobody, and proposed without exception to receive no one; that he walked about the town both in the morning and afternoon, and visited among others the shop of Herr Weidmann 'where the most exquisite Vienna leather goods are made'; that in the evening he had heard Millöcker's operetta 'The Vice-Admiral' at the Theater an der Wien; and that he was everywhere dogged by journalists, who gave the public elaborate descriptions of his person, the shape of his hat and the colour of his coat.

'I am hopelessly discovered,' wrote Lord Randolph to his wife (October 12). 'At the station yesterday I found a whole army of reporters, at whom I scowled in my most effective manner. Really it is almost intolerable that one cannot travel about without this publicity. How absurd the English papers are! Anything equal to the lies of the *Daily News* and *Pall Mall* I never read: that *Pall Mall* is most mischievous. . . . W. H. Smith is here, and we had a long talk last night. I have got him to go and see Paget—who wanted me to go and dine with him—and tell him that as I saw no one at Berlin I did not wish to see anyone here. The reporters have been besieging the hotel this morning, but I have sent them all away without a word. The weather is fine and bright, though there is an autumn chill in the air . . . This pottering about Europe *de ville en*

1886 — ÆT. 37 *ville* suits me down to the ground, if it were not for the beastly newspapers.'

His holiday was a short one. On his way back through Paris he had an interview which would certainly have interested those curious folk who had pried so zealously upon his unguarded leisure :—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Iddesleigh.

Hôtel Bristol, Paris: October 19, 1886.

Dear Lord Iddesleigh,—This morning Count d'Aunay called upon me. I think, from what he said, that he had been sent by Freycinet. I used to know D'Aunay very well when he was in London. I left him to begin what he had to say, and kept talking about *la pluie et le beau temps.* At last he rapped it out. He said the Egyptian Question was going to be 're-awakened.'

I asked what question.

He said the reorganisation of the administration, the tribunals, the customs, the army.

I said I did not see that any of these pressed; that Wolff and Mukhtar had got to make their report, which would take some time to consider; that, in the meantime, everything was going on quietly; that the country was progressing; that the payment of the coupon in full would be resumed next year; and that I could not conceive what object there was in raising the Egyptian Question in a critical manner now.

He said that the French were most desirous to co-operate with England in the re-establishment of Egypt; that they wished to be perfect friends with us, but that M. de Freycinet felt that Egypt was a continual *pierre d'achoppement*, and that there would always be great difficulties until it was got out of the way; that public opinion in France was now much agitated on the question; that they suspected we meant to take Egypt altogether; and that they must know what we intended to do about retiring.

I replied that it was impossible to reconcile this great desire on M. de Freycinet's part for friendship with the tone of the French Press on the proceedings of French agents at Constantinople; but that, in any case, of this he might be certain—that these things did not influence our policy in the least; that we did not intend to retire from Egypt until a stable Government had been constituted there, able to maintain itself and to pay its way; and that we should not 'budge an inch' from that resolution *pour quoi que ce soit, ni pour qui que ce soit*; that the work would take a long time, perhaps three years, perhaps five years, or perhaps ten years, or longer; but that till it was done our occupation of Egypt would continue.

He appeared much pained and upset by this, and argued for a long time that we could do nothing in Egypt on any question without French assistance.

I said we were most anxious for French assistance, although up to now we had managed to rub along without it; but that if there was to be any understanding for the solution of Egyptian questions between the two Governments, it must be upon the basis of our continued occupation of Egypt until certain definite and practical results were obtained which would be a reward to us for all the loss of money, men, time and trouble which our occupation had entailed on us.

He said we ought to fix a date for evacuation; that that would remove all suspicion of bad faith; that the French were obliged to press the point on account of their enormous interests and their numerous colony; that in the time of the 'condominium' they had occupied a perfectly satisfactory position, which they wished to regain.

I reminded him that they had deliberately abdicated that position when M. de Freycinet was Minister before; that they had left us all the trouble and all the danger, and that they must accept the logical results of that policy; that I

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saw no good in fixing a date for evacuation; that I did not think such a step would be honest, as we might not be able to abide by our pledge; that it was much better to define the work which had to be done, and to adjourn all questions of retirement until the completion of the work.

He went on pressing about the date in a curiously imploring manner. He said that it might be *aussi éloigné que vous voulez*, but that if we would only fix a date M. de Freycinet *sera parfaitement satisfait*, that he would work loyally with us, and that all would go differently.

I then said that this question of the date, to which he evidently attached so much importance, was a new one to me; that I could not tell what your opinions were, nor Lord Salisbury's; that personally I saw immense and insuperable objections to such a course; that it would really introduce a new element of uncertainty, and probably lead to great trouble. In conclusion, I entreated him not to be under any illusion as to our determination to remain in Egypt and to pursue our work there steadily; that the present Government, unlike Mr. Gladstone's, was very strong in Parliament, and would not yield to pressure; and that, till the French thoroughly grasped this fact, they would fail to understand the A B C of the Egyptian Question.

He said he should tell M. de Freycinet all I had said. He asked me if I wished to see M. de Freycinet, to which I replied in the negative.

I thought you would wish to know all this, and I hope you will approve of what I said. I return to town on Tuesday.

Yours very truly,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

'You seem to have defended the pass well, and the position you hold is a sound one,' replied Lord Iddesleigh in a letter which appears to be the last that passed between them.

Short as his absence from England had been, Lord Randolph found some difficulties aggravated on his return. The orthodox portions of the Conservative party had become articulate. Mr. Chaplin was denouncing the Closure by a simple majority as unconstitutional and improper. The *Times* had made up its mind against such a change, which it regarded as 'irreconcilably at variance with the fundamental principle of freedom of debate.' It expressed itself anxious to know what would have been the opinion of the former leader of the Fourth Party on the proposals of the new Chancellor of the Exchequer. The 'Dartford programme,' as the principles and measures expounded in Kent had already come to be called, notwithstanding the full approval which it had previously received from the Cabinet, had been exposed to various attacks in quarters usually believed to derive their information from official sources. The Carlton Club was reported to be vexed and sulky. Everywhere the question was asked: What would the Chancellor of the Exchequer say to the conference of Conservative Associations at Bradford? Would he be discovered in retreat or standing to his guns? Would he enlarge upon the Dartford programme or would he explain it away?

The conference met at Bradford on October 26. Lord Randolph made three speeches during the day. At the evening meeting he said he was very sorry he had made the Dartford speech. 'If I had not made it at Dartford three weeks ago, I might have

1886 ÆT. 37 made it here to-night.' He stood to the policy then declared in every detail. He welcomed Mr. Jesse Collings as an ally in the Allotments Bill. He asserted that Closure by a simple majority was the 'motor muscle'[1] of any reform in Parliamentary Procedure. He ridiculed the complaints of the Liberal party. 'All they can do apparently is to exclaim with impotent rage, "How unfair! how shameful! how unprincipled! You have stolen our programme." Why "their programme," I should like to know? Since 1880 they have been in office, and they did not make an attempt to carry out a single item. They tell us that the programme I sketched at Dartford is a Radical programme; that the Tory party have turned their coats and abandoned their principles and adopted the principles of the Radical party; and quantities of sentences of that kind and of equal stupidity. All I know about the programme of policy, foreign and domestic, which I endeavoured to outline at Dartford three weeks ago is this—that it was a mere repetition of the programme of Lord Salisbury at Newport in 1885. All I know about my speech at Dartford which I can say in reply to what I am told as to its being a total adoption of Radical principles and measures is this—that it was a mere reiteration and elaboration of the Queen's Speech of January last, when Lord Salisbury's first Government was in office, and of the speeches of the Ministers who supported the policy which was contained in that speech.'

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[1] An expression quoted from Mr. Gladstone.

These statements were greeted by the loud and continuous acclamations of an audience of Conservative delegates representing, it was calculated, fully a million and a half electors.

This determined speech and its thunderous endorsement silenced for the moment all hostile criticism. Some of Lord Randolph's colleagues expressed to him their disapproval of the attacks upon him from within the Conservative ranks. Others assured him of their agreement. Even the Lord Chancellor was satisfied. 'I have just finished reading your speech at Bradford,' he wrote (October 27). 'There is not a word that is not sound, good Toryism—aye, and old Toryism, too. The truth is that the enemy have been so long dressing up a lay figure which they have invested with their notions of what a Tory ought to be, that they do not recognise the genuine article when they see it.'

It is a pity not to end the story here. Lord Randolph Churchill seems at this time to have been separated only by a single step from a career of dazzling prosperity and fame. With a swiftness which in modern Parliamentary history had been excelled only by the younger Pitt, he had risen by no man's leave or monarch's favour from the station of a private gentleman to almost the first position under the Crown. Upon the Continent he was already regarded as the future master of English politics. His popularity among the people was unsurpassed. He was steadily gaining the confidence of the Sovereign and the respect and admiration

1886 ÆT. 37 of the most serious and enlightened men of his day. His natural gifts were still ripening and his mind expanding. The House of Commons had responded instinctively to the leadership of 'a great member of Parliament.' Alike in the glare and clatter of the platform and in the silent diligence of a public department he was found equal to all the varied tasks which are laid upon an English Minister. If he were thus armed and equipped at thirty-seven, what would he be at fifty? Who could have guessed that ruin, utter and irretrievable, was marching swiftly upon this triumphant figure; that the great party who had followed his lead so blithely, would in a few brief months turn upon him in abiding displeasure; and that the Parliament which had assembled to find him so powerful and to accept his guidance, would watch him creep away in sadness and alone?

Still, for an interval the sun shone fair. The clouds were parted to the right and to the left, and there stepped into the centre of the world's affairs—amid the acclamations of the multitude and in the hush of European attention—the Grand Young Man.

CHAPTER XV

THE CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER

'Those who live to the future must always appear selfish to those who live to the present.'—EMERSON.

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AT the Treasury the appointment of the new Chancellor of the Exchequer had been received with no little apprehension. Every great department has an atmosphere and identity of its own. No politician, however popular in the country or influential in Parliament, can afford to be indifferent to the opinion formed of him by the Civil Servants through whom and by whom he works. Concealed from the public eye among the deeper recesses of Whitehall, seeking no fame, clad with the special knowledge of life-long study, armed with the secrets of a dozen cabinets, the slaves of the Lamp or of the Ring render faithful and obedient service to whomsoever holds the talisman. Whatever task be set, wise or foolish, virtuous or evil, as they are commanded, so they do. Yet their silent judgments of their masters and their projects do not pass unheeded. Although the spell still works, it loses half its potency if these spirits are offended or alarmed; and padded walls of innumerable objections, backed by the masonry of unanswerable argument, restrain the irreverent or unworthy from the fullest exercise of the powers they may have won by force or favour.

Over all public departments the department of finance is supreme. Erected upon the vital springs of national prosperity, wielding the mysterious power of the purse, the final arbiter in the disputes of every other office, a good fairy or a perverse devil, as 'My Lords' may choose, to every imaginative Secretary of State, the Treasury occupies in the polity of the United Kingdom a central and superior position. No school of thought is so strong or so enduring as that founded on the great traditions of Gladstonian and Peelite finance. Reckless Ministers are protected against themselves, violent Ministers are tamed, timid Ministers are supported and nursed. Few, if any, are insensible to the influences by which they are surrounded. Streams of detailed knowledge, logic and experience wash away fiscal and financial heresies; and a baptism of economic truth inspires the convert not merely with the principles of a saint but —too often—with the courage of a martyr.

To many who had spent their lives at the Treasury, Lord Randolph's arrival was a shock. They regarded him, we are told, as 'an impossible man,' as 'one whose breath was agitation, and whose life a storm upon which he rode.'[1] They had instinctively resented the assaults he had delivered against Mr. Gladstone, 'the best friend the Civil Service ever had.' They remembered that, not long before, Lord Randolph had made himself the mouthpiece of a harsh attack upon one of their number. He was known to have expressed privately a candid opinion that they were 'a knot of damned Gladstonians.' Lastly, they had read his Fair Trade speeches; and, notwithstanding the reputation he had made at the India Office as a departmental chief, he still appeared in the eyes of Treasury officials as a Minister who would ride roughshod over their habits and violate all their most cherished financial canons.

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[1] 'Lord Randolph as an Official,' *Nineteenth Century*, October 1896, by the Right Hon. Sir Algernon West, K.C.B.

This mood was short-lived. The disquieted officials found a Minister assiduous and thorough in work and scrupulously patient and quiet in discussion. He possessed the very rare gift of keeping his mind exclusively devoted to the subject in hand, and impressed on all those with whom he worked the idea that the business on which they were employed was the only one of interest to him. No time spent with the Chancellor of the Exchequer was ever wasted. No interruption of any sort was suffered. No one ever left his room after an interview without having at any rate gained a clear knowledge of his views and intentions. Around all played an old-fashioned ceremony of manner, oddly mingled with a sparkle of pure fun, which charmed everybody. In a month the conquest was complete. Every official worked with enthusiasm in his service and all their mines of information were laid open to his hand. It has often been said that Lord Randolph won his popularity among permanent officials by his subservience to their views. This is

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by no means true. If he cast away altogether as vicious and unpractical the Fair Trade opinions which he had urged, and which commanded so much support among the Tory democracy, it will also be seen that he was able to enlist the interest and positive support of his subordinates in schemes far outside the orthodoxy of the official mind. His stay at the Treasury was short; but his memory was long respected. He left behind him golden opinions and dearly treasured reminiscences. He took away with him friendships which lasted him his life.

'Our anxiety,' wrote Lord Welby in 1896, 'as to our new chief was soon dispelled. He met us from the outset with perfect frankness, which soon became cordiality; and I cannot recall a word or a line of his during his autumn office which I should have wished unspoken or unwritten. Not that he was an easy or an unexacting chief. He expected subjects to be laid before him fully, clearly and intelligently; and he was keen to mark default. He was, in short, a Minister of the type that Civil Servants appreciate. He ruled as well as reigned. He had a mind, and made it up; a policy, and enforced it. He was quick in acquiring information, quick in seizing the real point, quick in understanding what one wished to convey to him, impatient in small matters and details and contemptuous if one troubled him with them. Above all, he was accessible; ready and willing to hear what one had to say, whether it accorded with his own views or not. Doing business with him was most interesting. Not being a respecter of persons, he criticised freely and pointedly men and matters. . . . In "chaff" he was unsurpassed. He was singularly free from affectation of knowledge he did not possess. Could one fail to take an interest in a chief "who always showed us sport"?'

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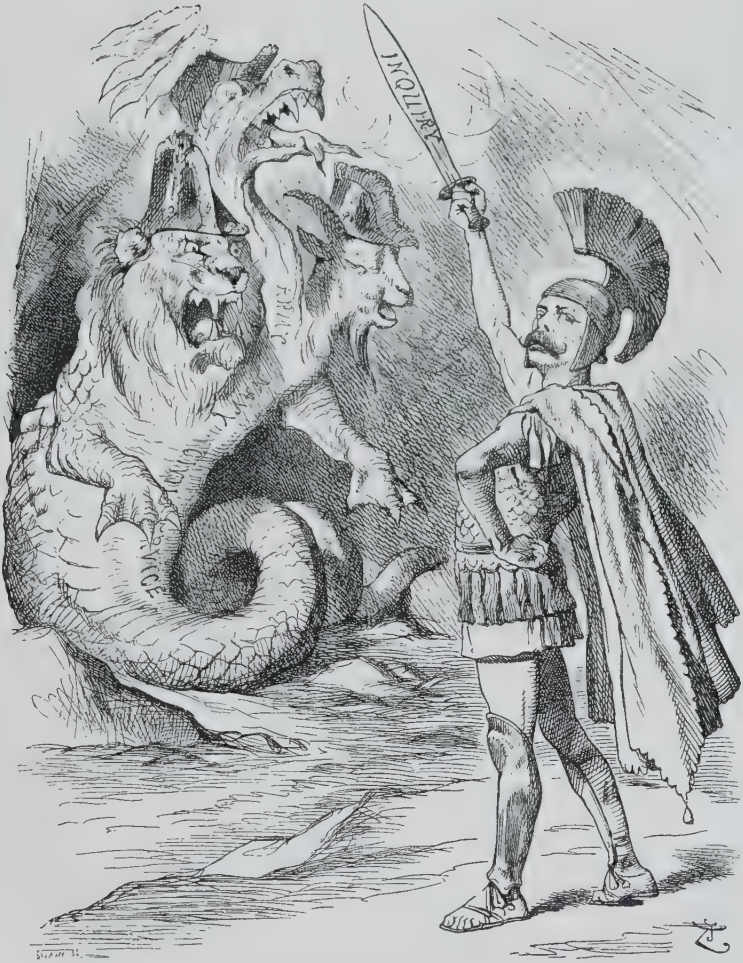
Many tales of Lord Randolph in these days have been preserved. We have a glimpse of his first meeting with a rather dismayed subordinate in the historical Board Room at the Treasury—the stiff and formal cut of his frock-coat, the long amber cigarette-holder, so soon produced, the eternal cigarette, and 'an old-world courtesy of manner' which surprised and disarmed a preconceived dislike. We see him going down to the City with Sir Edward Hamilton to lunch formally with the Governor and Directors of the Bank of England and hovering for half an hour outside in a panic of nervousness which robbed him for the time of his self-confidence. We see him once, and once only, when the Court of Exchequer, presided over by its Chancellor, settles the list from which Sheriffs are selected, in his robes of office—those imposing and expensive robes which seem to assert the opulence which should result from thrift, rather than thrift itself. His cynicism was disarming. We are told how, when the dreadful subject of bimetallism cropped up, he turned to Sir Arthur Godley and said: 'I forget. Was I a bimetallist when I was at the India Office?' When he received an influential deputation of sugar-refiners and sugar-planters in protest against the foreign Sugar Bounties, he created general consternation by inquiring, with immense gravity, 'Are the consumers represented upon this deputation?' We are even told how he complained to a clerk who put some figures before him that they were not clear and he could not understand them. The clerk said that he had done his best, and, pointing them out, explained that he had reduced them to decimals. 'Oh,' said Lord Randolph, 'I never could make out what those damned dots meant.' But this was surely only to tease.

From the very commencement of his career at the Treasury Lord Randolph began the exertions for economy to which he felt himself bound by his electoral pledges. In his private affairs he was usually extravagant and often unbusiness-like; but public money seemed to him a sacred trust. The character and extent of Treasury control over expenditure is very often misunderstood. It is represented sometimes almost as a statutory or constitutional power over the other departments. Such an idea is a complete delusion. The Chancellor of the Exchequer is able to exert his influence in two ways: first, over administration. In small matters not connected with policy, the Treasury acts upon a set of well-defined rules and principles, which the spending departments recognise and endeavour not to infringe and which are enforced more or less strictly, according to the relative authority of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the other Ministers concerned. Secondly, there is the wide domain of policy; and in all great matters the control of the Treasury is neither more nor less than the personal influence of



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BELLEROPHON JUNIOR.

'I THINK THIS 'LL FETCH 'EM!!'

'The Chancellor of the Exchequer states to the Board that Her Majesty's advisers desire to satisfy themselves that the clerical establishments of the Civil Service, of the Naval and Military Departments, and also of the Revenue Departments, are organised generally upon a principle which secures efficiency without undue cost to the public.'—*Treasury Minute*, Sept. 14.

Punch, September 25, 1886.

the Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the Cabinet. Of Lord Randolph's attempt to assert that influence the next chapter must give some account; but in the meanwhile he laboured with industrious severity to effect administrative economies. On September 14 a Treasury Minute announced the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the establishment and organisation of the great spending departments: 'The Chancellor of the Exchequer states to the Board that Her Majesty's advisers desire to satisfy themselves that the clerical establishments of the Civil Service, of the Naval and Military Departments and also of the Revenue Department, are organised generally upon a principle to secure efficiency without undue cost to the revenue.' A variety of petty economies were effected by his personal authority. He discovered, among other things, that Government specie had to be conveyed in merchant ships, at much expense, because an old custom entitled naval officers to a high percentage. His indignation at hearing that Her Majesty's gold could not be conveyed in Her Majesty's ships because of claims by Her Majesty's officers led to immediate action, and the practice was reformed forthwith.

A remark by the Comptroller and Auditor-General in one of his reports to Parliament drew his attention to another abuse. Of old times sums were issued out of the Civil List to the Secretary of the Treasury for secret service. No public account was rendered of the money thus expended. In 1783, many evils being alleged, Parliament, under the influence of

Burke, was persuaded to limit this grant to 10,000*l.* a year; and that amount was yearly issued to the Secretary of the Treasury from 1783 to 1886. This branch of secret service was, of course, political and was quite distinct from that which is ordinarily known as foreign secret service. The money was used for the purposes of political organisation by the party which happened to be in power. Such a custom could not on any valid ground be defended. Yet for over a century the grant had never been seriously questioned. It might have been urged that the Liberals had always profited by this sum during their long period of power and that many famous men had assumed responsibility for it. Lord Randolph brushed such wire-puller's arguments aside. Before he had been in office a month he introduced a Bill, which passed rapidly through Parliament, abolishing this payment altogether, and it has never since been renewed.

Until 1886 there had existed an octroi duty on coal coming into the Metropolis, the proceeds of which were divided between the City and the Metropolitan Board of Works. The principle of this duty was not unpleasing to the Conservative party. Its abolition was roundly denounced by the *Standard* and in high Tory circles. The Metropolitan authorities were glad to get money in an easy and painless manner. Powerful interests objected to a rise in the rates, while the abolition of a duty upon a necessary of life which affected the poor consumer, did not elicit much enthusiastic support. Lord

Randolph took some time to make up his mind. He decided that an octroi duty was out of date, that it was a survival of a financial policy that had been emphatically condemned. He declined to countenance its renewal. His speech to the deputation may be read with profit by any who care to see the arguments against such an octroi put tersely, forcibly and without reserve. His impressions at the Treasury seem to have stimulated his mind to great activity and to have aroused in him a keen financial instinct. All sorts of plans were being moved forward by his agency towards and into the sphere of political action. He contemplated the purchase of Irish Railways by the State and their use as an instrument of economic development and of political and strategic control; and Lord Salisbury himself seems to have been persuaded by his arguments. He paid the closest attention to the coinage, and harboured a deadly design against the half-sovereign—'that profligate little coin'—which he believed was an expensive and unnecessary feature of British currency. But there was one great scheme which overshadowed all the rest.

Parliament had no sooner risen than Lord Randolph turned to the preparation of his Budget. He knew that the duties of leadership in the next Session would demand his whole attention and physical strength; and, in spite of the labours of the memorable year 1886, he succeeded, by what Sir Algernon West has described as 'a performance never equalled,' in getting ready and laying before the

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Cabinet his financial proposals for the year 1887–8. For nearly twenty years his projects have been veiled in mystery. The silence of the Treasury has remained unbroken. The few high officials who were admitted to his confidence and whose sympathy was enlisted in his plans, have kept their own counsel. Lord Randolph did not choose in any public speech to reveal what he had purposed. He is the only Chancellor of the Exchequer who never introduced a Budget; and in his lifetime rumour alone asserted that he had ever formed one. The time has now come when the abandoned Budget of 1887–8 may be fully unfolded in the form in which, during November, 1886, it received the provisional assent of Lord Salisbury's Cabinet.

The reader who has accustomed himself to the giant Budgets of modern times must turn his mind and contract his fancy to the humbler figures of a vanished age. The cost of governing the United Kingdom and of providing for the defence of the Empire during the early 'eighties fluctuated between eighty and ninety millions a year. This was in itself a distinct increase on the estimates of Lord Beaconsfield's Administration; and Tory speakers were wont to dwell with genial malice upon the fact. The various wars which had disturbed Mr. Gladstone's rule had left their marks upon the economy of the Army. The money raised by the Vote of Credit in 1885 had been scattered with a lavish hand, and prominent men in both parties were concerned to notice some apparent relaxation in the strictness of Treasury control. Few, indeed, thought so seriously of the future as Lord Randolph Churchill, and his prediction that a 'Hundred-million Budget' would be an event of the future was generally regarded as unduly pessimistic. But nevertheless the times were not unfavourable to retrenchment, and there was a healthy demand for departmental reform. With estimates standing at under ninety millions small economies were not disdained. The Ministers of those days had not learned to expand their view of the public resources. A saving of a hundred thousand pounds was regarded as a matter of legitimate congratulation: a reduction of a million was an achievement.

Yet at the same time the narrow scrutiny to which expenditure had been so long subjected and the habitual reluctance of statesmen to enlarge its bounds, left no very obvious opportunities to the new Chancellor. The field had, except for some small patches, been well and thriftily gleaned. Nor did it seem at first sight that the system of taxation which had for five years received Mr. Gladstone's approval would readily lend itself to striking or sensational treatment.

On the other hand, however, more than one great tendency to change was apparent. The whole question of the Sinking Fund was ripe for reconsideration. The remodelling of the death duties thrust itself before every Chancellor each succeeding year. Above all, the inevitable and swiftly approaching departure in Local Government, involving as it did a complete readjustment of national and local finance and the

1886 ÆT. 37 transference of large responsibilities and resource from Whitehall to the County and Borough Councils, required a strong and daring mind at the Treasury.

Certainly Lord Randolph Churchill's plan did not err on the side of timidity. He contemplated nothing less than a complete reconstruction of the revenue. The general rate of expenditure and the whole condition of the National Debt were examined anew by a searching and audacious eye. Hardly a single tax was left untouched. The death duties, the house duties, the stamp duties, the wine duties, were all the subject of reform. Immense reductions were proposed in existing taxes. Numerous new taxes were devised. All these changes were not a mere meddlesome and vexatious shifting of burdens from one shoulder to the other. They were each and all essential parts in a vast financial revolution.

The first object of the Chancellor of the Exchequer was to effect a large and substantial reduction in taxation. He desired especially to diminish those taxes which fell upon the lower middle class. He laboured to transfer the burdens, so far as possible, from comforts to luxuries and from necessaries to pleasures. He applied much more closely than his predecessors that fundamental principle of democratic finance—the adjusting of taxation to the citizen's ability to pay. His second object was to provide a much larger sum of money for the needs of local bodies, so that the impending measure of Local Government might be wide and real in its character.

His third object was to effect a certain definite economy in the annual expenditure.

The estimates with which he was confronted amounted to 90,400,000*l*. The income which the existing taxes were expected to yield was 90,000,000*l*. The Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed to augment his income by extra taxation aggregating 4,500,000*l*.—namely, by an increase in the death duties of 1,400,000*l*., and in the house duties of 1,500,000*l*.; by extra stamps to yield 284,000*l*.; and by a wider application of corporation duty, worth 315,000*l*.; by the revival of a tax on horses to produce 500,000*l*.; by an increased tax on wine to produce 250,000*l*.; and by certain minor taxes, to be considered later, which were estimated to produce 300,000*l*. He proposed to diminish his expenditure by withholding the 2,600,000*l*. local grants-in-aid, for which a new provision was to be made; by a reduction in the charge for the debt of 4,500,000*l*.; and by a direct economy of 1,300,000*l*. He had, therefore, raised his income to 94,500,000*l*., and reduced his expenses to 82,000,000*l*., thus becoming possessed of a surplus income over expenditure of 12,500,000*l*. This surplus he intended to distribute variously. 5,000,000*l*. were to be available for the purposes of Local Government, in lieu of the old grants-in-aid of 2,600,000*l*. The indirect taxpayer was to be relieved by a reduction of the tea duties from 6*d*. to 4*d*., costing the revenue 1,400,000*l*.; and by a reduction of 4*d*. in the tobacco tax, costing 500,000*l*. The income-tax payer received the greatest advantage, 1886 ÆT. 37 for by a remission, costing no less than 4,870,000*l.*, the rate of the income-tax was to be lowered from 8*d.* in the pound, at which it stood in 1886, to 5*d.* in 1887. These outgoings together aggregated 11,770,000*l.*, and the Treasury was left with a final surplus of 730,000*l.*

These proposals require to be more closely examined. The principal feature of the new taxation was the re-grading and increase of the death and house duties. The death duties in force in 1886-7 were four in number—namely: (1) Probate duty upon the *personal* property passing on the death of any person, irrespective of destination; (2) the account duty, imposed since 1881 chiefly as a preventive to evasion of probate duty, and chargeable in respect of personalty included in voluntary settlements—death-bed gifts, &c.; (3) the legacy duty, upon benefit derived by the successor to *personal* property of the deceased at rates according to consanguinity; and (4) the succession duty, upon benefit derived by the successor to settled personalty and to the *real* property of the deceased, also at rates depending on consanguinity, chargeable, however, on the life interest and not on the capital value. Lord Randolph Churchill approached this complicated system of taxation with the double object of obtaining a larger revenue by a simpler method. He wanted more money and less machinery, fewer taxes and an increased return. His early inquiries at Somerset House and the discussion of the first suggestions which, coming fresh to the subject, he me

00 000

add

Deduct* Extra taxation

00 000 death duties

00 000 House duties

84 000 extra stamps

5 000 Corporation duty

00 000 horses

Surpl 00 000 Sundries

50 000 wine

Remi 500 000.

Surplus income.

put forward, served to convince him that a higher symmetry and co-ordination were required. He saw that any scheme which involved four or five different duties, and which attempted to deal with *personal* estate by means of a graduated *ad valorem* tax on the estate as a whole, and later with *real* estate by means of consanguinity on individual benefits, would not bear controversial examination. The death duties had grown up in a series of successive expedients. They were an admitted patchwork, but a patchwork to which the House of Commons had become accustomed. So long as they were left untouched, their anomalies and entanglements would be tolerated, or even admired; but if they were to be remodelled, re-graded and, above all, increased, they would have to stand fire, their whole structure would be criticised, and a new plan would be damned because it resembled an old plan long respected. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, therefore, began next to inquire as to the 'possible effect of a graduated *ad valorem* tax on *real* estate corresponding to the graduated tax on *personal* estate,' and his mind was soon determined in favour of such an assimilation of the death duties on the two classes of property. The method by which to achieve this object involved, of course, the whole question of graduation. Should graduation be regulated by the total mass of property passing by any one death, whether composed of realty or personalty; or partly of one and partly of the other; or should it be governed by the

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total benefit received by an individual on succession, whether out of realty or personalty, or both combined? Should the rate of duty depend upon the total wealth of the testator or upon the respective windfalls of the heirs? These questions have been long and fiercely debated. The Childers Budget of the year before had aimed at an equalisation of the death duties on *real* and *personal* property by means of an extension of the account duty, but it contained no element of graduation. The rate of duty was to be the same for large properties as for small (except very small) estates, and was to apply equally to realty as to personalty. Lord Randolph did not adopt this idea. His scheme was to graduate the duty according to the value of the individual succession. What the living man got, not what the dead man left, was to be the unit of graduation.

If, for example, by the death of A., X. took 2,000*l.* *personalty* and 3,000*l.* *realty*, Lord Randolph would have combined the two, and have applied the rate (say, 3 per cent.) levied on a succession of 5,000*l.* If by the same death Y. took 20,000*l.* *personalty* and 30,000*l.* *realty*, Lord Randolph would have applied the rate (say, 6 per cent.) for a succession of 50,000*l.*; and so on, always graduating the rate according to any one person's succession; so that the successor to a small benefit would pay a low rate of duty, and the successor to a large benefit a high rate of duty. In short, Lord Randolph was for a graduated succession duty instead of a graduated estate duty. The Finance Act of 1894 has asserted and established the opposite principle. Sir William Harcourt looked simply at what a dead man left or liberated, and on the aggregate of that amount the graduation now in force depends. Thus it may very well happen, and often does happen, that a successor to a small benefit —perhaps a succession worth no more than 500*l.*— pays the highest rate (8 per cent.) of estate duty, because his succession is part of an aggregate estate worth one million. The principle which governs the Finance Act of 1894 was laid very plainly before Lord Randolph in 1886. But he rejected it in favour of the graduation on the individual succession, saying, after one long discussion at Somerset House, 'My instinct tells me that it is wrong.' It is curious that his instinct, whether right or wrong on the technical question, anticipated the principal objections which Mr. Balfour and Mr. Chamberlain urged against Sir William Harcourt's Bill, and indicated the line of principle to which the whole Conservative party was subsequently committed.

This choice being made, the Chancellor of the Exchequer turned his attention to the principle of consanguinity. Why should graduation be regulated by kinship? Does not kinship find its adequate expression in the dispositions made by the testator? Does not the testator naturally select his wife and children as the objects of his bounty in preference to relations of remoter degree? Why should the State complicate its affairs by recognising the principle of consanguinity in a taxing statute? Lord Randolph Churchill therefore proposed to discard the principle

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of consanguinity altogether. All existing duties on properties of whatever kind, passing by death after a given date, and in dispositions taking effect after that date, were to be swept away. Real property was to be placed on the same footing as personalty, and chargeable no longer on life interest, but on capital value. The one graduated succession duty, graduated on amount of benefit received and not depending at all upon consanguinity, was to replace them all. The old probate, account, legacy, inventory (Scotland) and succession duties were to be left to work themselves out by lapse of time, that process being accelerated by a liberal system of discounts.

It is, perhaps, of some interest to contrast this scheme with that which now holds the field. We now enjoy a duty called 'estate duty'; an extra duty, levied in certain circumstances on settled property, called 'settlement estate duty'; and, finally, the legacy and succession duties, depending on the consanguinity existing between the donor and the donee. We now assert the vicious principle of taxing property instead of persons. We try to tax the dead instead of the living. The State refuses to consider for purposes of graduation anything so personal as the sacrifice of the heirs, and bases itself on the mass of the inheritance. Conjoined with this in utter contradiction we have a cumbrous and elaborate recognition of such a purely personal and private principle as consanguinity.

Lord Randolph would have replaced these four or five duties of great complexity by one intelligible tax. He would have substituted one Act of Parliament for thirty or forty. He would have secured a far greater flexibility in case further increases of direct taxation were necessary. A vast simplification of the accounts required would have notably diminished the expenses of lawyers, valuers, accountants and actuaries, now attendant on the payment of death duties. The just complaint of the small inheritor from a great estate would have been prevented; and for various illogical or contradictory methods the one simple principle would have been erected, that taxation should be proportioned to ability to pay and to benefit received. The increase which Lord Randolph contemplated in the death duties, would have been unpopular with the Conservative party. He was informed that the estate of nearly every member of the House of Lords would have been prejudicially affected thereby. But, in view of what befell in 1894, it is clear that wealthy people would not have been in the long run the losers by an early settlement.

The tax upon inhabited houses was respectably ancient in its origin. It had been first imposed in 1696, and had continued at various rates till 1834. Repealed in 1834, it was reimposed in 1851 by Sir Charles Wood on the abandonment of the duty on windows, and at the rate of 6*d.* for shops, beerhouses and farmhouses, and 9*d.* for dwelling-houses (those under 20*l.* annual value being exempt), it yielded in the financial year 1885-6 1,867,377*l.* to the revenue. Lord Randolph proposed to repeal the existing Act, thus cutting away the many important

1886 exemptions it contained, and by a new Act to
ÆT. 37 restore the house duty to what it formerly was—namely, a tax on all houses inhabited either by day or night. He intended to revert to the old principle of graduation, to the old definition of an inhabited house and to the old lowest limit of taxable value. The new Act would further have repealed the provision in the law under which only one acre was to be included with the house for purposes of valuation—excepting the case of agricultural lands attached to farmhouses. Mills and warehouses used for storing goods were to be exempt; but it was provided that any person on the register of voters in respect of the occupation of a tenement should be liable to assessment for that tenement or part of a building; including even all who were entitled to vote under the service franchise as occupiers of apartments in Militia or other barracks. The scale of duty was lower for shops than for private houses, and progressed rapidly as the value increased. Value under 20*l.*: shops, 3*d.*; cottages, 4*d.* Value over 20*l.* and under 50*l.*: shops, 6*d.*; private houses, 9*d.* Value over 50*l.* and under 150*l.*: shops, 1*s.*; private houses, 1*s.* 6*d.* Value over 150*l.* and under 300*l.*: shops, 2*s.*; private houses, 3*s.* Value 300*l.* and upwards: shops, 2*s.* 6*d.*; private houses, 3*s.* 6*d.* This new tax was estimated to produce, on existing valuations, an additional revenue in the first year of 1,500,000*l.*, and, what was of even more importance (having regard to future Budgets), was estimated to rise to 2,380,000*l.* in the second and subsequent years.

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Under the heading of 'extra stamps' the Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed: (1) An alteration in the scale of duty upon patent medicines. The scale then in force under an Act of George III., and continued to this day, presses rather heavily on the 1*d.* and 2*d.* boxes, &c., of medicines sold in poor neighbourhoods. Lord Randolph's new scale would have afforded relief to these small parcels, and have more than recouped itself on the larger and more costly.[1]

The yield of the old duty had been steadily increasing in later years. In 1869–70 it had produced 72,000*l.*; in 1879–80, 135,000*l.*; in 1885–6, 178,000*l.* It was estimated that Lord Randolph's duty would produce an increase of between 50,000*l.* and 70,000*l.* in the first year (not, of course, complete) and of 100,000*l.* in the second year. But the yield of the future would have been much richer. The old scale of duty still in force produced in 1904–5 not less than 331,000*l.* Had Lord Randolph's scale been in force the extra revenue would probably by now have exceeded 250,000*l.* a year.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer also proposed: (2) A 2*s.* per cent. stamp duty on the share capital of joint-stock companies. He estimated this to

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[1] Scale of 1886, still in force:—

Where the packet, box, bottle, pot, &c., did not exceed the price or value of 1*s.*, the duty was			*s.*	*d.*
			0	1½
Exceeded 1*s.*, but did not exceed 2*s.* 6*d.*			0	3
„	2*s.* 6*d.* „	4*s.*	0	6
„	4*s.* „	10*s.*	1	0
„	10*s.* „	20*s.*	2	0
„	20*s.* „	30*s.*	3	0
„	30*s.* „	50*s.*	10	0
„	50*s.*		20	0

Lord Randolph Churchill's proposed scale:—

			s.	*d.*
Not exceeding	2*d.*	in value	0	0½
„ „	6*d.*	„	0	1½
„ „	1*s.*	„	0	3
„ „	2*s.*	„	0	6
„ „	4*s.*	„	1	0
„ „	8*s.*	„	2	0
„ „	12*s.*	„	3	0
„ „	20*s.*	„	5	0
„ „	40*s.*	„	10	0
Exceeding	40*s.*	„	20	0

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produce 100,000*l.* yearly, and 58,000*l.* in the year 1887–8. This plan was adopted by Mr. Goschen in 1888. The results exceeded expectation, and the tax yielded in the first year 158,000*l.* In 1899 the duty was increased to 5*s.* on share capital, and extended at half-scale to loan capital. The yield for 1904–5 was 388,000*l.* from share capital and 73,000*l.* from loan capital.

(3) A group of proposals comprising an extension of receipt duty to sums between 10*s.* and 2*l.*; the repeal of certain exemptions, such as a receipt written upon a bill of exchange, or upon a duly stamped instrument, acknowledging receipt of consideration money therein expressed; a duty on tickets of admission to places of amusement (French plan) and upon certain documents in the nature of vouchers, e.g. those given to persons making purchases at stores and other large trading establishments; a duty on certificates of proprietorship of shares, and upon letters of application for stock; and an assimilation of the duty on transfers of debenture and ordinary stock. This last has been since effected. The others, with all that may be urged in their behalf, must stand upon their mere recital. This group of revised duties was estimated to produce an additional 150,000*l.* a year, and the whole of the alterations in the stamp duties would have yielded 284,000*l.* in the first year and above 400,000*l.* in the next.

A yearly tax of 5 per cent. was imposed in 1885–6 on the income of corporations as an equivalent for the

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death duties, which they escape. The yield in the first year was 34,000*l.* Municipal corporations were, however, exempted, although they paid income-tax on their realised property. By repealing this exemption Lord Randolph Churchill would have considerably increased the yield of the duty. Taking the accounts of ten municipal corporations of mixed sizes and importance, it was found that the average income derived from rentals, waterworks, gasworks, tolls, &c., exclusive of interest on investments, was 38,000*l.* Assuming there were 275 corporations—an assumption which left an ample margin—the gross income assessable would have been 10,450,000*l.*, yielding a revenue of 522,000*l.* From this, however, a large deduction had to be made for interest paid on loans raised on the security of the property apart from the rates, leaving as the result of the tax a net addition to the revenue of 315,000*l.*

The Chancellor of the Exchequer proposed also to revive the tax upon horses and the special tax on racehorses which had been abandoned by Sir Stafford Northcote in 1874, from which a sum of 500,000*l.* would accrue to the State. In 1888, when Mr. Goschen endeavoured to re-introduce this duty, no serious objection was raised by the House of Commons. Strong opposition was, however, excited by the wheel and van tax which he suggested at the same time. In the hope of carrying the unpopular tax by linking it with one more favoured, Mr. Goschen declared that the two taxes must stand or fall together.

1886 Æt. 37 But the House was not to be cajoled. Both projects were withdrawn, and the transfer which has since taken place of all analogous duties to local authorities, seems permanently to have interfered with any attempt to secure this convenient source of revenue for Imperial purposes.

Two other classes of proposed extra taxation remain to be considered. If every one of the 70,000,000 cartridges which were used each season had a 1*d.* revenue stamp pasted over the shot end, the national resources would be enriched by 280,000*l.*[1] in a complete year. The sportsman whose unerring aim never required a second barrel, except for another bird, would in poetic justice enjoy a comparative immunity. But while his unskilful companion blazed away he might remember that at each discharge the stamp blown to pieces by the explosion would carry its tribute to the public treasury. Besides this, mainly with a view to putting a stop to their reckless use by boys and others, pistols were to be taxed 1*l.* a year and pistol-dealers 20*l.* a year; and brokers, whose responsible functions seemed to deserve some recognition from the State, were to be duly licensed at 5*l.* a year. By these sundries 300,000*l.* would be secured immediately, and about 400,000*l.* in a complete year. The augmentation of the wine duties by various devices, falling chiefly upon the higher quality wines, so as to yield an additional quarter of a million, raised the total of the new taxation to 4,500,000*l.* in the first year, with a considerable natural growth in prospect.

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[1] The exact figure is 291,666*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*, but some reduction would probably occur in practice.

Of the steps by which Lord Randolph designed to diminish his expenditure only one need be considered here; for the transference of the 2,600,000*l.* grants-in-aid to another and larger fund is a matter chiefly of book-keeping, and the definite economy of 1,300,000*l.* which he regarded as so important belongs to another part of the story. But the proposal to reduce the Sinking Fund by no less than 4,500,000*l.* is startling enough to compel attention.

The condition of the National Debt was in 1886 peculiar. When Sir Stafford Northcote, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1875 reorganised the service of the debt, he had, in order to make 'steady and continuous efforts for its reduction,' assigned a fixed annual sum of 28,000,000*l.*, covering both interest and Sinking Fund, and payable, unless Parliament should in the meantime otherwise determine, as long as any debt remained outstanding. On March 31, 1875, the National Debt amounted to 769,000,000*l.*; and if Sir Stafford Northcote's scheme as it stood on the statute book had remained unaltered, if no war or other disturbing element had intervened, this debt, without any addition to the yearly charge of 28,000,000*l.*, would have been entirely paid off about the year 1930. This was the arrangement which Lord Randolph now proposed to revise, and it therefore requires closer examination. The full charge of 28,000,000*l.* came into operation in 1877–8. It was divided between interest and

Sinking Fund. At the outset the proportion assignable to interest and management was between 23,000,000*l.* and 24,000,000*l.*, and the proportion assignable to Sinking Fund between 4,000,000*l.* and 5,000,000*l.*; but this proportion steadily changed by the automatic working of the scheme. Year by year as the debt capital was reduced by the amount of successive Sinking Funds, that part of the 28,000,000*l.* required for interest diminished, and that part available for Sinking Fund proportionately increased. According to the moderate computations of Sir Stafford Northcote when presenting his scheme to the House, 230,000,000*l.* of the debt would have been paid off by the present year—1904–5. In that case the capital of the debt would now stand at about 540,000,000*l.*, the interest proportion of the 28,000,000*l.* would amount to sixteen and a half millions, and the Sinking Fund proportion to about eleven and a half millions. Thus the scheme, which in the beginning imposed a charge on the taxpayer equivalent to 2½*d.* in the 1*l.* for the purposes of a Sinking Fund, automatically progressed until that burden would have become equivalent to 5*d.* in the 1*l.* at the present time, and rising further to 1*s.* or more in the 1*l.* before it reached its consummation. While already himself attaining a high degree of financial virtue, Sir Stafford Northcote indicated to his successors a standard three and four and five times as exalted.

Each generation, almost each decade, claims its right to revise its standards; and as the rate of human improvement was less rapid than the growth of Sir

Stafford Northcote's Sinking Fund, it had in 1886 become clear that the public would not acquiesce in the logical result of the 1875 scheme, or regard as a sacred obligation the exact fulfilment of a plan which, snowball fashion, rolled on with ever-accumulating weight and ended by requiring the exaction from the taxpayer during a small number of years of an amount in repayment of debt which sound reasoning could not justify. Already the scheme itself had yielded to the pressure of a passing emergency. Mr. Childers had suspended the Sinking Fund in great part during the Egyptian War and the Russian panic of 1885–6; Sir William Harcourt had permitted a smaller suspension in 1886–7. Indeed, Sir Stafford Northcote seems to have felt that his scheme could not be maintained in its fulness to the end, and that when the Sinking Fund had risen to a certain figure, the taxpayer of the day would claim to share with it the benefit resulting from the progressive diminution in the interest of the debt. If, then, it were conceded that the Northcote Sinking Fund could not be maintained in its entirety till 1930, the revision of the scheme became simply a question of the manner, the measure and the time.

These considerations were strengthened by another set of arguments. In 1887 the funded debt amounted to 637,000,000*l.* A large part of this debt—probably 150,000,000*l.*—was held by public departments; another large part was held by banks, insurance companies and by trustees. It was computed later by skilled authorities that the holdings on this account were not less than 200,000,000*l.* As these holdings were practically not offered on the market for sale, the field for purchases of stock was comparatively narrow. If a large amount of Sinking Fund were applied to purchases of stock in this narrow field, the prices of Consols would be quickly and unnaturally inflated. This condition was actually reached in later years, when the public credit was so esteemed that the State enjoyed the privilege of paying 113*l.* to redeem 100*l.* of its own debt.

Lord Randolph decided that the time had come for a revision of the Northcote scheme. He found himself possessed of a lever capable of exerting on one occasion—and on one occasion only—a giant's power. He was anxious that it should be made the instrument of great and substantial reform, and not wasted gradually for the sake of convenience or popularity. For the purposes, therefore, of effecting a reduction and a general readjustment of taxation and as an integral part of his Budget scheme, Lord Randolph proposed to reduce the total immediate charge of the debt from 28,878,000*l.* to 24,417,000*l.*, thus effecting a saving of 4,461,000*l.*, or, roughly, four and a half millions. The Northcote Sinking Fund would thus have been reduced by two-thirds to 2,160,000*l.* The reduction of such a great weapon of financial reserve as the Sinking Fund has proved in times of warlike emergency was practically replaced by the gain in expansive power supplied by

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an income-tax as low as 5*d*. The positive economy on naval and military estimates clears the Chancellor of the Exchequer from any charge of laxity or indulgence. His judgment on the main question of revision was ratified within two years by the high and severe financial authority of Lord Goschen, and was further confirmed eleven years later by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach. The former reduced the fixed charge from 28,000,000*l*. to 25,000,000*l*.; the latter reduced it again from 25,000,000*l*. to 23,000,000*l*., at which figure it stood when the South African War broke out. But these reductions, aggregating 5,000,000*l*. a year, were enforced, the one for the purpose merely of affording a petty relief to the tax-payer of the year, and the other to find ways and means for the growing expenditure of a Government, and not, as Lord Randolph had designed, for the sake of a large and harmonious reform.

By these methods, however they may be regarded, the Chancellor of the Exchequer would have become possessed of a surplus of noble proportions. And the distribution of the 12,500,000*l*. which he had secured is the coping-stone of the whole financial scheme. Tea and tobacco are familiar friends to the students of Budgets. Year after year their fortunes fluctuate in sympathy with those of the nation. In the year 1886-7 tea was taxed 6*d*. in the pound and yielded 4,514,874*l*. A reduction of 2*d*. upon tea is a generous boon to every poor household. The tiny packet is a farthing cheaper. The careful spoonfuls may be more freely bestowed; and the relief is gratefully

1886 Æt. 37 acknowledged by an immediate increase in consumption. Lord Randolph had estimated that his reduction would cost the revenue 1,400,000*l.*; but this seems to have been an over-estimate, for when Mr. Goschen four years later was able to make this desirable change the loss to the revenue was only 1,100,000*l.*, owing to the greater indulgence of the people.

Who is there, of those who pay it, that will not look back with envy from these days of 1*s.* income tax, almost as a permanent charge in times of peace, to times when a tax of 8*d.* was regarded as abnormally high; when one Chancellor of the Exchequer was resolved to reduce it to 5*d.*, and when his successor (Mr. Goschen) declared that, except for purposes of war, 6*d.* was a proper limit'? Of all Lord Randolph's proposals none, it may be safely said, would have been greeted with more general approval than his intended reduction of the income tax from 8*d.* to 5*d.* At that time incomes below 150*l.*, a year were exempt, but incomes of 150*l.* and less than 400*l.* wore allowed an abatement of 120*l.* Incomes of and above 400*l.* a year had to pay on the full amount. Official statistics have always been silent as to the total number of income-taxpayers, it being apparently impossible to frame a trustworthy estimate. It is nevertheless probable that the bulk of persons who are called upon to pay this impost are included in the 150*l.*–400*l.* class. It was to this considerable class, composed mainly of persons emerging into an independence they have earned for themselves, and rising by their own industry from the level of exemption to that of income-tax-paying means, that Lord Randolph's sympathies were directed. The small householder, pinched by having to pay in the early days of January the landlord's tax under Schedule A, which he cannot recover till he pays his rent at the end of March; the petty tradesman or struggling professional man who defends a precarious respectability by a systematic thrift too often unknown to the burly wage-earner; these are the special beneficiaries from such a reduction and they share in a peculiar degree in the general expansion of comfort and energy which must follow when five millions of money are surrendered by the State and left to fructify in the pockets of the people.

The largest claim upon the surplus was in respect of Local Government. Lord Randolph proposed to assign the revenue received from a large number of Excise licence duties to the various local authorities about to be established. As it was undesirable to saddle the new-born authorities with the difficulty and expense of collecting many duties for which they possessed no adequate machinery, he arranged that a large number were still to be collected by the State, and the proceeds, less the cost of collection, were to be afterwards transferred. Dogs, guns, game, carriages, servants, armorial bearings, auctioneers, hawkers, patent medicine vendors, plate dealers, refreshment houses, pawnbrokers, tobacco and sweets dealers, beer, wine and spirit dealers, and the new tax on horses, aggregating in all 2,700,000*l.*, were to be

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thus for the time being reserved. But all licences which the local bodies could collect without any additional cost or trouble were to be handed over at once. 1,544,000*l.* worth of liquor licences fell into this latter class. They were to be granted, as heretofore, only on the production of a magisterial consent, and nothing was simpler than to make the paying of the duty and the obtaining of the consent simultaneous. Lord Randolph's schemes on this point travelled beyond both the Budget and the Local Government Bill, and embraced local option in the drink traffic. He believed that the liquor laws ought to be intimately connected with Local Government. He wished to entrust local authorities with very large powers to regulate the sale of liquor in their districts; and he thought that if the revenue which arose from liquor licences was made an important source of revenue for the local authority, a salutary check would be provided against hasty or fanatical action, leading perhaps upon a popular impulse to total prohibition, and upon the rebound to an unrestricted sale. 'When you are legislating,' he said a year later at Sunderland (October 27, 1887), 'about subjects which interest human beings, it is just as well not to leave altogether out of account human nature.' The transfer by different methods of these sources of revenue, together with the contribution of 800,000*l.* in aid of the indoor poor, provided the round sum of 5,000,000*l.* as the foundation upon which Local Government was to be erected.

The preparation of such a Budget required an extraordinary exertion. Scheme after scheme was formulated, only to break down in discussion and to be dismissed. Many days—wrested by an effort from other pressing occupations—were consumed in study and reflection. But at length all was in order and the plan was in detail settled and complete. In every respect—in the definite economy, in the reduction in the expenditure on armaments, in the increase in the proportion of direct taxation, in the immense diminution of public burdens, in the enormous simplification of the death duties and the introduction of a logical system of graduation, in the ample provision for the needs of Local Government—it was a democratic Budget. Yet it was cunningly contrived. The importance and cohesion of the scheme would have secured it a momentum of its own. Objections upon detail could at every point have been answered by general principles. The low income-tax balanced the diminished Sinking Fund. The economies in public charges justified the remissions of taxation. The tremendous appeal to the middle classes of a *5d.* income-tax would have provided the driving power needed from within the Conservative party. Nevertheless, it was in a grave and nervous mood that the young Chancellor introduced it to the Cabinet in the early days of December. He spoke long and earnestly. He exerted all his power of luminous and attractive exposition. The whole proposal was unfolded. His colleagues seemed for the moment fascinated. Objections and doubts were silenced together. No one cared to assail in detail a scheme all parts of which hung so closely together and which, in the mass, displayed such novel and spacious outlines. Even Lord Iddesleigh, the creator of the threatened Sinking Fund, consented to its dissolution for the sake of the integrity of the scheme. Lord Randolph had come prepared for an uncertain and protracted battle. He seemed to have won the victory at a single charge.

His friends at the Treasury waited anxiously for his return. Startled as they had been by some of his views, foreign to their traditions as was his treatment of the debt, they had been drawn into the momentum of what was, after all, a great design. They were prompt to offer their congratulations upon the Cabinet acquiescence. But Lord Randolph was far from confident. The silence of his colleagues oppressed him. 'They said nothing,' he told Lord Welby, 'nothing at all; but you should have seen their faces!' He proceeded to give instructions for checking every figure and recasting every calculation from the beginning, as if he apprehended some tardy attack, against which preparations should be made. This arranged, as was his habit he pushed the whole matter from his mind. 'There,' he said grandly to Sir Algernon West later in the day, 'are the materials of our Budget. They are unpolished gems; put the facets on them as well as you can; but do not speak to me on the subject again until the end of the financial year.'

CHAPTER XVI

RESIGNATION

Happy the man, and happy he alone,
He who can call to-day his own—
He who, secure within, can say:
'To-morrow do thy worst, for I have lived to-day.
Come fair or foul, or rain, or shine,
The joys I have possessed, in spite of fate, are mine.
Not Heaven itself over the past hath power;
But what has been has been, and I have had my hour.

Lines from Dryden copied out by Lord Randolph Churchill about 1891.

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On the morning of December 23 all who took an interest in politics—and in those days these were a very great number—were startled to read in the *Times* newspaper that Lord Randolph Churchill had resigned the offices of Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons and had retired altogether from the Government. As the news was telegraphed abroad, it became everywhere the chief subject of rumour and discussion, and Cabinet Ministers—dispersed on their holidays—hurried back to London to find out the truth of the matter and to prepare for the changes that must follow. To the political world the event came as a complete surprise. No important issue had arisen in foreign or domestic affairs; no great question likely

1886 ÆT. 37 to lead to such a breach was before the country; there had been hardly a whisper of Cabinet dissension. But if the reader has followed this account with any considerable measure of agreement or sympathy, he will see in this resignation no inexplicable mystery, no deep-laid intrigue, no explosion of temper; but the logical and inevitable consequence of all that had gone before.

Everything may go well with a liberal-minded man who belongs to the Tory party while his party is in Opposition. The natural disagreements which arise upon so many questions between the Government of the day and their political opponents make a broad platform on which the Democratic Tory and the old-fashioned Conservative can fight side by side in combination. When to those disagreements were added the danger of an Imperial disaster, acutely realised, and the antagonism which Mr. Gladstone inspired in all who did not worship him, the combination ripened into comradeship; and out of comradeship was born a sense of agreement which, after all, was pure illusion. It is not until men who really differ, try to work together at the business of government that their worst troubles begin. Even in the short Administration of 1885 the divergence between Lord Salisbury and Lord Randolph Churchill had been plain. But the 'Ministry of Caretakers' was in a minority. It was in a sense an Opposition rather than a Government. It had never exercised power. The disruption of the Liberal party and the decision of the electors had vitally altered the political situation. The

Conservative party, with their Unionist allies, were now supreme. They had achieved great power. What would they do with it?

Many of the letters which passed between Lord Randolph and the Prime Minister during their varied and eventful association have been printed here. A change, distinct and palpable, is to be noticed in the tone of their communications after the election of 1886. It is still friendly and open; Lord Randolph's letters still preserve their unvarying air of respect towards a higher officer of State and of deference to an older and far more experienced man. Yet it is less the correspondence of a lieutenant with his chief and more like that between separate authorities. The two men were, in fact, sustained by two different, and to some extent conflicting, sets of forces, and they stood for different ideas. Nor were those forces on which Lord Randolph Churchill counted so inconsiderable as the event might seem to prove. Tory Democracy had gained repeated victories in the past three years over the more Conservative element in the party. Lord Salisbury himself, under pressure, personal and of circumstances, had advanced vastly from his political position in the early 'eighties. He had gone as far as Newport. He had gone as far as Dartford. It did not seem improbable that, if pressed, he would go still further and that without any serious damage to party unity the liberalizing process which had already effected so much in the composition, character and prospects of the Tory party might continue. The 'old gang' was now widely scattered. Some had retired; some were in the Lords. Others had not been included in the Government. The Cabinet had been largely formed of men whose speeches and general views were democratic. The younger and more active elements in the party were adventurous and progressive. Many of the members returned by the constituencies, and especially by the boroughs, had given pledges to the electors at which 'high and dry' Tories stood aghast.

A careful examination of the Conservative majority in the House of Commons justified the belief that it was neither unfitted nor unwilling to be the instrument of large constructive reforms. It seemed, moreover, that the alliance with the Unionist Liberals and Radicals, on which the existence of the Government depended, would strengthen powerfully the more Liberal elements in the Conservative ranks and would even require an increasing measure of Liberal legislation as a condition of support. Mr. Chamberlain and his immediate followers were also a very important factor; and Lord Randolph, as the principal link which united them to Lord Salisbury's Government, had every reason as well as every inclination to study their wishes. Looking broadly at the situation during the autumn of 1886, it was not unreasonable to hope that an era of domestic reform might be safely and prosperously inaugurated. But, in any case, Lord Randolph's own position was perfectly well understood. His declarations had been clear and full. He had made no secret of his opinions; and upon finance, upon Local Government, upon Ireland, upon land and liquor, upon questions connected with property and labour, they were unmistakably declared. Yet with the full knowledge of his opinions and every indication which the past could supply that he would fight sternly for them, the Prime Minister had invited him to undertake the second post in his Government, and Lord Randolph's acceptance had been, with unimportant exceptions, endorsed and even acclaimed by the whole party. Why should it ever have been supposed that he would have abandoned forthwith all his liberal views, would have repudiated or ignored all his pledges of economy and would have settled down to the adroit manipulation of a Parliamentary majority for strictly Conservative ends and the elaboration of ingenious excuses for departmental and administrative scandals? The Prime Minister and the party must have known—and they did know when Lord Randolph Churchill was called to lead them in the House of Commons—that he could only lead them in one direction, and that direction, so far as domestic affairs were concerned, a Liberal direction.

It is no doubt true that he rated his own power and consequent responsibility too high. Like many a successful man before him—and some since—he thought the forces he had directed in the past were resident in himself, whereas they were to some extent outside himself and independent. But this error was shared by his colleagues and by the Prime Minister.

They had no idea what he could do, or how hard he could hit if he were assailed. They remembered his previous withdrawals and how he had always come back stronger than ever. They saw how often in the last few years his judgment had proved right and how he had always won in the end, no matter how slender were his own resources and how strong the confederacy by which he was opposed. They feared him greatly. But they were Tory Ministers; and they did not intend, whatever happened, to be dragged out of their own proper sphere and committed to large reforms and democratic Budgets. Better far Lord Hartington and the Whigs! Better even the Grand Old Man!

In all that concerned the management of individuals, Lord Salisbury excelled. No one was more ready to sacrifice his opinion to get his way. No one was more skilful in convincing others that they agreed with him, or more powerful to persuade them to actual agreement. His experience, his patience, his fame, his subtle and illuminating mind, secured for him an ascendency in his Cabinet apart altogether from the paramount authority of First Minister The Leader of the House of Commons, triumphant in Parliament, almost supreme in the country, found himself often almost alone in the Cabinet. The disproportion perplexed and offended him. He believed that he had got the majority together. He wanted to see it used well and boldly in correcting abuses, in carrying great reforms, and moving always onwards. He believed that unless the Conservative party gave proof of their zeal for popular causes the constituencies, so painfully won over, would revert to Radicalism, that the Unionist alliance would collapse and that Mr. Gladstone would return to power. And he would be held responsible for the disaster!

From the very outset the new Administration was uneasy. Discord stirred restlessly behind the curtains of Cabinet secrecy. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had his own views about Ireland and Irish landlords, and they differed from those of the Prime Minister. He was, so Lord Randolph described him to Lord Salisbury in a letter on August 22, 'afraid of being forced to administer Ireland too much on a landlord's rights basis.' He had been upset by the Chancellor of the Exchequer's statement that any revision of rents by State interposition was altogether excluded from Conservative policy. He would not agree to the principle that any permanent guarantee of the judicial rent was conveyed to the landlord in 1886. Lord Randolph, however, persuaded him that these questions did not arise seriously for immediate decision.

The autumn Councils were not harmonious, whether upon foreign or domestic affairs. The proposed changes in Parliamentary procedure, and especially the question of the Closure, provoked awkward differences, nearly every prominent member of the House of Commons holding strong personal opinions based on long personal experience. One Minister felt unable to be responsible for proposing Closure by a simple majority, and recommended that the Government should leave the matter as an open question to the House. Others disputed on the relative merits of a two-thirds or three-fifths majority. The tangled controversies connected with the details of English and Irish Local Government proved even more troublesome. To lighten the ship it was decided to confine the Bill to county government alone. For a long time it seemed impossible to reconcile the divergent views of the Prime Minister and the Irish Secretary, and, as it was intended that Sir Michael should himself take charge of the Bill, the difficulty was grave. 'I wish there was no such thing as Local Government,' wrote Lord Salisbury pathetically to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, after an elaborate 'eirenicon' which he had proposed had been abruptly rejected by his colleagues.

Besides these internal differences, the alliance with the Liberal-Unionist leaders, upon whose goodwill the existence of the Government depended, required careful and unremitting attention. In November Lord Hartington, who felt the need of meeting Mr. Gladstone's demand for a constructive Irish policy with positive proposals, if the Liberal and Radical Unionists were to be kept solid against the Home Rulers, pressed that a Local Government Bill for Ireland should be promised in the Queen's Speech. He suggested that this should provide for the establishment of Irish County and District Councils, with liberty to two or more to act together for certain specified purposes affecting their several jurisdictions; but no further. He pointed out that, as Irish Local Government would necessarily proceed on more 'Conservative' lines than English Local Government, the Irish settlement, if first effected, would afford a safer model for the English measure. This argument much impressed the Prime Minister; but Lord Randolph Churchill, who also appreciated its force, objected for that very reason to giving Irish Local Government precedence over the English Bill, and he succeeded, by the influence of a friend, in persuading Lord Hartington to abate his Irish claims. Mr. Chamberlain also intimated, through Lord Randolph, that while prepared to give the Government policy a generous consideration, whether on foreign affairs or on the necessity for Coercion, he could not support anything that he considered reactionary in Local Government. The principal members of the Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Smith, then agreed upon an extensive proposal for England, with the understanding that an Irish Local Government Bill should be promised in the Queen's Speech, but introduced *after* England and Scotland had been dealt with.

One difficulty was thus removed; but, as the month drew on, continual divergences arose on questions of domestic policy. The Dartford programme was indeed, like the Budget—in principle, at least—accepted formally by Ministers. But their reluctance to embark on such policies betrayed itself in all sorts of small objections. The survivors of the 'old gang'

1886 were not inclined to forget the treatment they had
ÆT. 37 received. The 'Plan of Campaign' against the payment of rent, which had been started in Ireland as the Nationalist reply to the refusal of Home Rule, was spreading; and the difficulties of the Irish Government, divested of the exceptional coercive powers of former years, were such that Beach, on whom Lord Randolph counted greatly, was often obliged by his Irish duties to be absent from meetings of the Cabinet. The Chancellor of the Exchequer felt sorely the want of a friend. His delight when, at his continued request, Lord Salisbury brought Mr. Balfour into the Cabinet led him (November 17) to send the news to the *Times* before the Queen's consent had been obtained, and a breach of etiquette was narrowly averted.

Many of the lesser members of the Government were Tory Democrats; and much of the draft legislation that came before the Cabinet was Liberal in its character. Lord Randolph, however, had to fight single-handed for every point. A Minister who was called to one of the Cabinets on the Local Government Bill described to me the pleadings and arguments by which the Chancellor of the Exchequer strove tirelessly to extend its scope to the widest limits. 'We must not overweight the Bill,' said the Prime Minister at length. 'It is a heavy Bill already.' 'A heavy Bill!' repeated Lord Randolph, balancing the draft upon his fingers and letting it flutter to the ground, while everyone else sat silent. 'A heavy Bill!' He was, in fact, always the devil's advocate. 'I am appalled,' he wrote to the Prime Minister (December 2), 'at the strength of your disapproval of poor Long and Onslow's Allotments Bill. We shall have to cut it down like anything.' The concessions which were made to his insistence, disturbed his colleagues without satisfying him. The deference which he often showed to high Tory views, was forgotten amid disagreements so many and grave. When the last word had been said, no matter what compromise had been reached, this fundamental difference remained—that he regarded Liberal measures as things good and desirable in themselves; while many of his colleagues, and certainly his chief, looked upon them as so many unholy surrenders to the powers of evil.

'Alas!' wrote Lord Randolph sadly to the Prime Minister on November 6, 'I see the Dartford programme crumbling into pieces every day. The Land Bill is rotten. I am afraid it is an idle schoolboy's dream to suppose that Tories can legislate—as I did, stupidly. They can govern and make war and increase taxation and expenditure *à merveille*, but legislation is not their province in a democratic constitution. . . . I certainly have not the courage and energy to go on struggling against cliques, as poor Dizzy did all his life. . . .'

Lord Salisbury replied with great care and kindness; but he had little consolation to afford, and this letter seems to have been his last attempt:—

November 7, 1886.

My dear Randolph,—I did not get your note of yesterday till I got to town in the afternoon—and then it was too late

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to catch you. I saw Beach, however, and . . . . led him to tell me what had passed with Ritchie. It appears that the latter has abandoned the ground plan which he told me in September he was fully resolved on—namely, that if owners are to have half the taxation they should have half the representation too. This, as you remember, was a principle for which Beach contended vigorously last winter—and which was generally accepted by the then Cabinet. Beach thinks the abandonment of it would have specially injurious influences in Ireland.

For the rest, I fully see all the difficulties of our position. The Tory party is composed of very varying elements, and there is merely trouble and vexation of spirit in trying to make them work together. I think the 'classes and the dependents of class' are the strongest ingredients in our composition, but we have so to conduct our legislation that we shall give some satisfaction to both classes and masses. This is specially difficult with the classes—because all legislation is rather unwelcome to them, as tending to disturb a state of things with which they are satisfied. It is evident, therefore, that we must work at less speed and at a lower temperature than our opponents. Our Bills must be tentative and cautious, not sweeping and dramatic. But I believe that with patience, feeling our way as we go, we may get the one element to concede and the other to forbear. The opposite course is to produce drastic, symmetrical measures, hitting the 'classes' hard, and consequently dispensing with their support, but trusting to public meetings and the democratic forces generally to carry you through. I think such a policy will fail. I do not mean that the 'classes' will join issue with you on one of the measures which hits them hard, and beat you on that. That is not the way they fight. They will select some other matter on which they can appeal to prejudice, and on which they think the masses will be indifferent; and on that they will upset you. My counsel therefore is strongly against this alternative; and it would be the same if I had no interest in the matter, and was merely an observer outside the Ministry advising you. Your *rôle* should be rather that of a diplomatist trying to bring the opposed sections of the party together, and not that of a whip trying to keep the slugs up to the collar. . . .

Yours very truly,
SALISBURY.

Yet the first session of a Parliament and the first year of an Administration are the most critical. Men are not really bound together in a Government until they have made mistakes in common and defended each other's failures; and it is possible that, unless definite and urgent disagreements had arisen, the evil hour might have been long averted. But Lord Randolph Churchill was not only responsible for the House of Commons; he was responsible for national finance. And from the Treasury a second set of questions necessarily involving sharp differences with his colleagues now began to arrive.

The reader will not fail to recognise how vital a definite economy was to the character and success of Lord Randolph Churchill's Budget. The reduction of the Sinking Fund and of taxation generally could only be defended in association with a lower expenditure. Circumstances now within our knowledge seem to show that the Chancellor of the Exchequer's margin was larger than he had dared to expect. But so many novel sources of revenue, tapped for the first time, introduced uncertain factors into his calculations. His public declarations before the general election had been unmistakable. He was pledged to

1886 Æt. 37 the hilt in the cause of economy, and the actual conditions fortified his sentiments. Even before the Bradford meeting, the tension was apparent:—

Mr. Smith to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Confidential. Greenlands, Henley-on-Thames: October 24.

My dear R. C.,—I shall probably see you in Arlington Street to-morrow, but I may not have an opportunity of begging you not to indicate too precisely at Bradford the results you may anticipate from economies in army administration. I shall do everything I can in that direction, but I am anxious, as you must be, as to the aspect of affairs, and I think the policy you are anxious to carry out is best supported by the organisation of the strength we possess than by allowing the present unready condition to continue.

As to this I must have a serious talk with you when you come back from Bradford. I contemplate method, management, arrangement—rather than large present expenditure; but, unless you see your way through the difficulties in Turkey and as to Egypt easily and peaceably, it would be unwise, I think, to announce reductions in military Budgets which would be interpreted, as the Paris *Temps* suggests, as presaging a withdrawal of England from the positions she has taken up. It may be necessary to take such a course, but it can only be done after the most grave deliberation: it almost involves a recognition of the fact that we are no longer one of the Great Powers.

I prefer to say these things to you alone than to talk of them before Salisbury. Our diplomacy is no doubt very weak, but this does not entirely explain our powerlessness in Europe. . . .

Yours very sincerely,
W. H. Smith.

All through the month of November the annual conflict between the Treasury and the spending departments was maintained with unusual vigour and with varying fortune. On the 3rd a Treasury Minute accelerated the preparation of the estimates :—

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.:
November 3, 1886.

In view of the probability of the meeting of Parliament being fixed for the middle of January, the First Lord of the Treasury and I are of opinion that the Army and Navy Estimates should be considered by the Cabinet before Christmas. Will you therefore kindly direct that the estimates decided upon by the War Office should be ready by the first days of December? We shall then be well ahead of our work.

'Do you observe,' wrote Smith on the 7th, 'that under pressure our people in Egypt see their way now to a great reduction of military expenditure? Only a fortnight ago they were the other way minded.' And again on the 20th, when some Treasury probing had touched a tender spot :—

'This departmental extravagance is not mine, but my predecessor's, and full *private* notice has been given repeatedly since August. I hope I may yet save something, but the cake was eaten before I got here. We will talk about it when we next meet.'

Other departments had to face a not less searching examination, and the Navy and Colonial Office estimates were the subject of prolonged and animated correspondence. There was, of course, nothing unhealthy, or even unusual, in all this. It is the business of the Treasury to canvass all proposals which involve expenditure and to compel those who bring them

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forward to show, not merely that they are necessary and desirable, but that they are more necessary and more desirable than other necessary and desirable projects. Without such severe controversial examination of estimates, the finances of the wealthiest country would soon be in disorder and the money of the taxpayer squandered irretrievably. But it may well be believed that, with all the good-will in the world, the month of November is a stormy period for the Chancellor of the Exchequer and brings him daily into acute antagonism with his colleagues. In such circumstances only the closest sympathy and support from the Prime Minister can sustain him. He is one against many, and must otherwise submit or resign. But on this occasion, when there should have been the most intimate alliance, there opened vast and comprehensive differences; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer became continually more isolated and from that very cause more combative. The money clauses of the Local Government Bill—affecting as they did so many settled interests, interwoven as they were with the whole finance of the year—led to vexatious and protracted discussions. Behind all loomed the vague yet formidable shadow of the Budget itself. By the end of the month it was evident that a crisis was approaching.

'Salisbury,' wrote Lord George Hamilton on the 25th, 'is getting to the position where he will be pressed no more. If a rupture takes place, it will damage us almost irretrievably; for he would carry with him a large portion of the party, and your position would be very much, as you yourself said, like to that of Sir Robert Peel, who, though he carried Free Trade, was without a party afterwards. Gladstone cannot live for long and if we only hold together we shall utterly foil him.

'I write feelingly, for if we break up, my vocation of peacemaker between the different sections of the party is gone and I should take up some other line of work than politics. Things are, I fear, worse than we thought two days back; however, you will see for yourself and act accordingly.'

The definite collision took place just before the estimates of the Navy and Army were finally presented. Lord Randolph Churchill insisted upon some reduction and made no secret that he would set his official existence on the issue. Hamilton replied that 50,000*l.* was the utmost further variation that could be expected at the Admiralty. Smith wrote as follows:—

Private. December 14, 1886.

My dear R. C.,—I am very sorry to say that the first review of my figures affords no hope whatever of any reductions in W. O. estimates as compared with 1886–7.

We lose 100,000*l.* of Indian money, and have to meet extra charges for leap year—Volunteers, Reserve, and other automatic increases—which are enough to drive one wild, without entering upon the questions of giving small-arm ammunition and defence.

I shall be able to give you a rough idea of the probable gross estimate on Thursday or Friday, but it will not be a pleasant one.

Yours very sincerely,
W. H. Smith.

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And again on the 16th, in a remarkable letter showing that he, too, was prepared to go to extremes :—

Private. December 16, 1886.

My dear R. C.,—I have been thinking a good deal over your letter of yesterday.

I am as much committed to economy as you are, but I cannot be the head of a great department in times like these and ask for less than the absolute minimum required for the safety of the country.

I will go into figures with you if you like—but it is out of the question for you to talk of retiring. If one of us goes, I shall claim the privilege ; and you may rest assured that if a man can be found to take my place, I shall be delighted to give all the help in my power to a successor brave enough to assume responsibility which I am not prepared to bear.

I will speak to you after the Cabinet to-morrow.

Yours very sincerely,
W. H. SMITH.

Bear in mind that in the House—if I am there—I do not ask you to defend my estimates or to excuse them.

'You will shortly have to decide,' wrote Lord Randolph in a good-humoured letter to the Prime Minister, December 15, 'whose services you will retain—those of your War Minister or those of your Chancellor of Exchequer.

'Smith informs me of his inability to make reductions in the Army Estimates ; I have informed him of my absolute and unalterable inability to consent to any Army Estimates which do not show a marked and considerable reduction.

'George Hamilton has made me a reduction in the Navy Estimates of over 700,000*l*. If these things can be done at the Admiralty, the attitude of the War Office becomes intolerable. Generally speaking, however, I am anxious to submit to you to-morrow the draft of a Treasury minute to the public departments calling their serious attention to their increasing expenditure and requiring marked and immediate economies.'

Lord Salisbury's reply indicated clearly the side to which his sympathies inclined :—

Hatfield: December 15, 1886.

My dear Randolph,—I will be in Downing Street at half-past three. I have got to go to Windsor at a quarter to five. There was nothing for it but to consent to the Egyptian expenditure, though it is very lamentable—all Gladstone's fault. The Cabinet, happily, not I, will have to decide the controversy between you and Smith. But it will be a serious responsibility to refuse the demands of a War Minister so little imaginative as Smith, especially at such a time. It is curious that two days ago I was listening here to the most indignant denunciations of Smith for his economy—from Wolseley. I am rather surprised at George Hamilton being able to reduce so much. I hope it is all right.

Ever yours very truly,
Salisbury.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, however, showed no signs of yielding and his colleagues, feeling that the crash was coming, evidently took counsel with one another and broadened the ground upon which they stood and might have to fight. The

1886 ÆT. 37 Budget had meanwhile been passed through the Cabinet. But now doubt and hesitation seemed to have overtaken those Ministers who were concerned in the Estimates dispute. On the 18th Lord George Hamilton wrote that he thought the Budget 'exceedingly well balanced and comprehensive,' but on that very account the more likely to be attacked by the various interests concerned, and he asked for certain returns as to the incidence of taxation. It is significant that Mr. Smith wrote a similar letter on the same day, and Lord Salisbury on the day following:—

Mr. Smith to Lord Randolph Churchill.

War Office: December 18, 1886.

My dear R. C.,—I think you should send us a printed memorandum of your Budget proposals, in order that they may be considered carefully during our short holiday.

They are too large and important to be determined upon after a conversation across the table. It would not be fair to you nor to your colleagues, some of whom may not have fully realised all your proposals.

Yours very sincerely,
W. H. SMITH.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts: December 19, 1886.

My dear Randolph,—In the course of discussions on the Local Government Bill you have two or three times expressed the belief that the country gentlemen would be consoled for all they might lose under that Bill by the financial arrangements which were to be proposed; or, as you expressed it, that 'the pill would be gilded.' I think you have overlooked the fact that your local taxation proposals will relieve the towns more than the rural districts.

At least, I have looked up the figures for Hertfordshire, Suffolk, and Devonshire, and enclose a statement of them. The result is (if I rightly understood your proposals) that the ordinary country gentleman will have an extra burden of ninepence in the pound—which is gilding of a negative kind.

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Ever yours truly,
SALISBURY.

The situation was fast becoming acute. At a dinner on the 18th, when the Prime Minister was Lord Randolph's guest, shrewd observers had noticed, underneath much personal courtesy, an air of harsh political antagonism. The effect of these letters was decisive. Lord Randolph forwarded the figures which Lord Salisbury had enclosed to the Treasury and called for a memorandum in reply. His pencilled comment on the paper is, 'Lord Salisbury's figures are incomprehensible.' The Treasury answer required a little time to prepare; but the next day Lord Randolph wrote back:—

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: December 20, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I know the country gentlemen, like the farmers, always think they are being plundered and ruined. The facts are, however, that whereas the ratepayers used to receive in gross three millions from the taxes, they would in future under my scheme receive over five millions. Of course the towns will get the bulk of the indoor pauper contribution.

Real estate pays succession duty on an average about once in thirty years. We do not estimate that the change in the succession duty will add more than a million a year to the present yield of 800,000*l.*, and it will take at least twelve years to work up to this amount. When the

1886 — Æt. 37 succession duties were first voted by Parliament, they were estimated to produce 2,000,000*l*. I believe the produce has never exceeded 900,000*l*. The assimilation of the incidence of death duties on real estate to that which falls upon personal estate has not of late years been resisted in principle even by the strictest sect of the Tories.

I enclose you the G.O.M.'s reply to my communication. I hear rumours that he is contemplating the policy of throwing over the Home Rulers.

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

That same afternoon the Chancellor of the Exchequer was summoned to Windsor. Travelling thither, he met by chance in the same railway carriage Lord George Hamilton. Lord Randolph, who was in excellent spirits, said briskly that he intended to resign that day. Hamilton was much shocked, and urged patience, delay and so forth. Lord Randolph remained inscrutably gay. That night the Queen showed him most gracious favour, and kept him long in conversation. He spoke of many matters of policy —of the new Procedure rules, of Ireland, even of the prospects of the coming session—but of his determination not one word escaped him. It was late when he retired, yet he proceeded forthwith to write his letter of resignation to Lord Salisbury. Hamilton, who came to press him once again, was treated with extreme good-humour, and had it all read out to him before it was despatched :—

Windsor Castle: December 20, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—The approximate Estimates for the Army and Navy for next year have been to-day communicated to me by George Hamilton and Smith. They amount to 31 millions—12½ millions for the Navy, 18½ millions for the Army. The Navy votes show a decrease of nearly 500,000*l.*, but this is to a great extent illusory, as there is a large increase in the demand made by the Admiralty upon the War Office for guns and ammunition. The Army Estimates thus swollen show an increase of about 300,000*l.* The total 31 millions for the two Services, which will in all probability be exceeded, is very greatly in excess of what I can consent to. I know that on this subject I cannot look for any sympathy or effective support from you and I am certain that I shall find no supporters in the Cabinet. I do not want to be wrangling and quarrelling in the Cabinet, and therefore must request to be allowed to give up my office and retire from the Government.

I am pledged up to the eyes to large reductions of expenditure, and I cannot change my mind on this matter. If the foreign policy of this country is conducted with skill and judgment, our present huge and increasing armaments are quite unnecessary, and the taxation which they involve perfectly unjustifiable. The War estimates might be very considerably reduced if the policy of expenditure on the fortifications and guns and garrisons of military ports, mercantile ports and coaling stations was abandoned or modified. But of this I see no chance, and under the circumstances I cannot continue to be responsible for the finances.

I am sure you will agree that I am right in being perfectly frank and straightforward on this question, to which I attach the very utmost importance: and, after all, what I have written is only a repetition of what I endeavoured to convey to you in conversation the other day.

Believe me to be
Yours most sincerely,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

Early the next morning both Ministers left Windsor and returned to London. Lord Randolph

1886 Æt. 37 bought, as was his custom, a number of newspapers, but found that neither he nor Hamilton had any change. The train was about to start, and the bookstall keeper, who knew both his customers by sight, cried: 'Never mind, my lord—when you come back next time will do.' Lord Randolph looked sideways at his companion and said, with a quaint smile, 'He little knows I shall never come back.'

It happened that at this time Sir Henry Wolff was at home from his Egyptian mission, and he and Lord Randolph consorted together daily. Both went down to the City on Wednesday, the 22nd; for the Chancellor of the Exchequer had to pay an official visit to the Master of the Mint. Lord Randolph proposed returning by the Underground Railway, and it was while they were pacing the platform, waiting for a train, that Wolff asked some chance question about the Treasury intentions. 'Upon my word,' said Lord Randolph abruptly, 'I don't know now whether I am Chancellor of the Exchequer or not.' But otherwise he never told a soul—not Beach, his trusted friend; not Chamberlain, his ally; not his mother; not even his wife. Lord Salisbury's answer did not come till eight o'clock on Wednesday. He had delayed in order to write to his principal colleagues, sending copies of Lord Randolph's letter, made laboriously with his own hand, and perhaps just in order to delay. It is certain that he did not regard the matter as settled. He wrote to Beach on the 21st that he was not sure whether Lord Randolph would persist. He sent no word to the Queen. Yet his answer, when it came, seemed conclusive. It proposed no compromise; it did not even suggest an interview; and the expression of regret with which it closed might apply either to the actual resignation or to the expressed intention to resign:—

Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts: December 22, 1886.

My dear Randolph,—I have your letter of the 20th from Windsor. You tell me, as you told me orally on Thursday, that 31 millions for the two Services is very greatly in excess of what you can consent to; that you are pledged up to the eyes to large reductions of expenditure, and cannot change your mind in the matter; and that, as you feel certain of receiving no support from me or from the Cabinet in this view, you must resign your office and withdraw from the Government. On the other hand, I have a letter from Smith telling me that he feels bound to adhere to the Estimates which he showed you on Monday, and that he declines to postpone, as you had wished him to do, the expenditure which he thinks necessary for the fortification of coaling stations, military posts and mercantile ports.

In this unfortunate state of things I have no choice but to express my full concurrence with the view of Hamilton and Smith, and my dissent from yours—though I say it, both on personal and public grounds, with very deep regret. The outlook on the Continent is very black. It is not too much to say that the chances are in favour of war at an early date; and when war has once broken out, we cannot be secure from the danger of being involved in it. The undefended state of many of our ports and coaling stations is notorious, and the necessity of protecting them has been urged by a strong Commission, and has been admitted on both sides in debate. To refuse to take measures for their protection would be to incur the gravest possible responsibility. Speaking more generally, I should hesitate to refuse at this time any supplies which men so moderate in their

1886 — ÆT. 37 demands as Smith and Hamilton declared to be necessary for the safety of the country.

The issue is so serious that it thrusts aside all personal and party considerations. But I regret more than I can say the view you take of it, for no one knows better than you how injurious to the public interests at this juncture your withdrawal from the Government may be.

In presence of your very strong and decisive language I can only again express my very profound regret.

Believe me
Yours very sincerely,
SALISBURY.

Lord Randolph Churchill never doubted the meaning of the answer he had received, and treated it as a formal acceptance of his resignation. He concluded, as will appear, that the delay had been due to communications with the Queen, and that the whole matter was now ended. He sat down at once and wrote to Lord Salisbury a letter of farewell:—

Carlton Club: December 22, 1886.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—I have to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of to-day's date accepting my resignation of the Chancellorship of the Exchequer.

I feel sure you will believe me when I express my deep and abiding appreciation of the unvarying kindness which you have shown me, and of the patience and indulgence with which you have always listened to the views on various public matters which I have from time to time submitted to you.

The great question of public expenditure is not so technical or departmental as might be supposed by a superficial critic. Foreign policy and free expenditure upon armaments act and react upon one another. I believe myself to be well informed on the present state of Europe, nor am I aware that I am blind or careless to the probabilities of a great conflict between European Powers in the coming year. A wise foreign policy will extricate England from Continental struggles and keep her outside of German, Russian, French or Austrian disputes. I have for some time observed a tendency in the Government attitude to pursue a different line of action which I have not been able to modify or check.

This tendency is certain to be accentuated if large estimates are presented to and voted by Parliament. The possession of a very sharp sword offers a temptation, which becomes irresistible, to demonstrate the efficiency of the weapon in a practical manner. I remember the vulnerable and scattered character of the Empire, the universality of our commerce, the peaceful tendencies of our democratic electorate, the hard times, the pressure of competition and the high taxation now imposed; and with these factors vividly before me I decline to be a party to encouraging the military and militant circle of the War Office and Admiralty to join in the high and desperate stakes which other nations seem to be forced to risk.

Believe me, I pray you, that it is not niggardly cheese-paring or Treasury crabbedness, but only considerations of high state policy which compel me to sever ties in many ways most binding and pleasant.

A careful and continuous examination and study of national finance, of the startling growth of expenditure, of national taxation resources and endurance, has brought me to the conclusion from which nothing can turn me, that it is only the sacrifice of a Chancellor of the Exchequer upon the altar of thrift and economy which can rouse the people to take stock of their leaders, their position and their future.

The character of the domestic legislation which the Government contemplate in my opinion falls sadly short of what the Parliament and the country expect and require.

The foreign policy which is being adopted appears to me at once dangerous and methodless; but I take my stand on expenditure and finance, which involve and determine all other matters. And reviewing my former public declarations on this question and having no reason to doubt their soundness, I take leave of your Government, and especially of yourself, with profound regret, but without doubt or hesitation.

Yours most sincerely,
Randolph S. Churchill.

After writing this letter he went down to the *Times* office, imparted his priceless information to Mr. Buckle, authorised him to make it public, and so to bed. Lord Salisbury received this second letter at half-past one in the morning of the 23rd, and realised that the breach was definite. He posted the news at once to the Queen; but he was already too late. With the first light of the morning the announcement appeared in the *Times*.

This action of Lord Randolph Churchill in resigning the office he held in such a manner and on such an occasion has two aspects—a smaller and a larger. Both are partly true: neither by itself is comprehensive. The smaller aspect is that of a proud, sincere, overstrained man conceiving himself bound to fight certain issues, at whatever cost to himself—believing at each movement that victory would be won, and drawn by every movement further into a position from which he could not or would not retreat. The larger aspect deserves somewhat longer consideration. The differences between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and his colleagues were matters of detail and might easily have been compacted. The difference between the Leader of the House of Commons and the Prime Minister was fundamental. It must be plain to the reader who has persevered so far. It glows through the correspondence included in this chapter. It was a difference of belief, of character, of aspiration—and by nothing could it ever have been adjusted. There were many considerations and influences which worked powerfully for their agreement. In the Union they found a common cause; in Mr. Gladstone they faced a common antagonist. Lord Randolph's fiercest invective did not jar upon the 'master of flouts and jeers.' Neither could be insensible to the personal fascination of the other. Both rejoiced in a wide and illuminating survey of public affairs; both dwelt much upon the future; both preserved a cynical disdain of small men seeking paltry ends. But the gulf which separated the fiery leader of Tory Democracy—with his bold plans of reform and dreams of change, with his record of storm and triumph and slender expectations of a long life—from the old-fashioned Conservative statesman, the head of a High Church and High Tory family, versed in diplomacy, representative of authority, wary, austere, content to govern—was a gulf no mutual needs, no common interests, no personal likings could permanently bridge. They represented conflicting schools of political philosophy. They stood for ideas mutually incompatible. Sooner or later the breach must have come; and no doubt the strong realisation of this underlay the action of the one and the acquiescence of the other.

I have tried to show that this profound difference found expression on many specific points. The Cabinet of 1886 had sat together only five months, yet here already were five important matters of disagreement :—The policy to be pursued in the East of Europe ; the complexion of the Local Government Bill ; the attitude towards the Whigs ; the character of the Budget ; and lastly, the direct cause of rupture, the expenditure upon armaments. Longer association threatened merely a multiplication and aggravation of divergences. But though patience could not have ended in agreement, it might have brought disagreement to another end. And it is from this point of view that Lord Randolph Churchill's action requires most careful examination.

The differences upon specific points, regarded singly, were serious ; and together they became vital. But they were differences less of principle than of degree. No clear and abrupt dividing-line was presented ; and the questions were always of 'more or less,' not of 'yes or no.' Why should Lord Randolph Churchill not, then, have kept his offices ? Would he not, by so doing, have had a much better chance of imparting to Conservative policy the complexion he desired ? Much was to be gained by waiting. Every day his position was becoming more assured. At every stage and turn of Cabinet discussion he could have laboured to deflect the course of legislation ; and the House of Commons might be guided more easily than his colleagues. In a hundred small ways he could, without any breach of confidence, have served the ends he had in view. But his gorge rose at it. It was almost impossible to him to defend courses of which he disapproved: and in the position he held every act of the Government must be constantly and whole-heartedly defended by him. Imagination might foresee this new Administration, which he more than any man had called into being, drifting irresistibly towards military ambitions and European entanglements, ending perhaps at last in war: and in all this he must be the principal agent—the man who had to make the House of Commons consent. No—at the very outset a decision must be taken and a pacific and progressive domestic policy established. Without that assurance the honours and amenities of power—and no one enjoyed them more—seemed valueless; and the money—a matter, as we have seen, in itself from other points of view of much consequence—a thing not to be considered for a moment.

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Of course, he hoped the others would give way—would, at any rate, make some considerable concession, which would leave him proportionately strengthened. 'With respect to Local Government,' he wrote to Mr. Chamberlain on the 19th, 'I pressed Lord Salisbury and Mr. Goschen very hard to give up the idea of *ex officio* representation, and' (a significant sentence) 'possibly my arguments may not be altogether without effect.' How could they do with outhim? Who was there to fill the Treasury? Could Smith make head against Gladstone in

Parliament? Was Lord Salisbury the man to maintain the alliance with the Chamberlain of 1886? Would Stanhope vindicate the Government in the constituencies? Balfour was unknown: Beach was ailing: Goschen was 'very hard to please': and the Whigs doubtful and contrary. Beyond all question he was the most powerful and efficient instrument at the disposal of the Prime Minister—probably, as it seemed, the only instrument which would be effective. And since so powerful and necessary, and moreover being possessed of a complete scheme and temper of political thought largely accepted among the people, he was bound to put it to the proof whether he should not exert an influence upon policy compatible with his public pledges and proportioned to his usefulness to the Government. But still a more patient man would have waited.

Undoubtedly he expected to prevail. What he asked was in itself a small thing: 'Cannot this vote for coaling stations, for instance, stand over till next year?'—some petty economy; but still an economy, and an economy in armaments. He knew that if they had wished to meet him, they could easily have compounded. Reductions greater than would have kept him, were made after he was gone. And since it was thus revealed that his colleagues did not wish to act with him, what a prospect of vexation and disappointment and special pleadings the future unveiled!—unless the matter could be settled at the very beginning and a peaceful and progressive policy assured.

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It seems, however, very surprising that Lord Randolph Churchill should at this period have overlooked the anger and jealousy that his sudden rise to power had excited. In little more than a year two Administrations had been formed from the Conservative party. In the making of both of these his influence had been almost supreme; and it had been an influence which, from the point of view of ordinary Parliamentary promotion, had been disturbing and even revolutionary. Men who in quieter times would have received office had been disappointed. Others who had enjoyed what they considered almost prescriptive right, had been forced out. The former leader of the Conservative party had been driven from the House of Commons. Mr. Matthews had been raised from private life to one of the highest posts in the Cabinet. This one, hitherto unknown, had been jumped up: that one, so long respected, had been thrust down. Malice proved a stronger motive power than gratitude; and, although unquestioned success had crowned the struggle, bitterness and resentment gathered behind the conqueror.

Nor, indeed, do we think he should have counted much upon the good-will of the plain member. He was often—and seemed to be, more often still—in things political a hard man, reaping where he had not sown, severe to exact service and obedience, hasty in judgment, fierce in combat; and many a black look or impatient word had been remembered against him by those of whose existence he was perhaps scarcely conscious. Friends he had in plenty—some of them true ones; but, for all the personal charm he could exert at will, his manner had added to his enemies. Venerable Ministers saw a formidable intruder who had entered the Cabinet by adventurous and unusual paths. Austere Conservatives shrank from this alarming representative of the New Democracy. Worthy men thoughtlessly slighted, tiresome people ruthlessly snubbed, office-seekers whose pretensions had been ignored, Parliamentary martinets concerned for party discipline, all were held in check only so long as he was powerful. His position had been won by the sword, and he must be armed to keep it.

Yet at this moment, when he proposed to try conclusions with all the strongest forces in the Conservative party, he seems to have taken no single precaution to safeguard himself. He gave the Cabinet long and ample notice of his intention. He reiterated his determination at intervals through the autumn. He knew that Smith and Hamilton took counsel together: he knew that they had prevailed upon Lord Salisbury; and that if in the end they should resist stubbornly, their resistance would not be ill-considered or unprepared. Upon the other hand, he made no effort to rally his own friends. A third at least of the Government were men of his own choice. Beach would have made great exertions on his behalf. But no one was consulted. He was in constant and intimate intercourse with Chamberlain. Their views at this time were almost identical; their relations most cordial. Yet he gave him no knowledge of the situation, nor dreamed of inviting his support: so strictly—quixotically even—did he interpret the idea of Cabinet loyalty.

Few men then alive were more skilled in political tactics, or knew better how to deal with a crisis. If he had made up his mind to break with the Government, there were many ways in which the severance might have been made effective. First, as to time. I have said a more patient man would have waited; a more unscrupulous man would most certainly have waited. The power of a Leader of the House of Commons whose chief is in the House of Lords, always immense, is far greater when Parliament is sitting. He is the general in the field at the head of the army. The other waits at home, trying to make what he can of the despatches. Moreover, the House of Commons, for all its staid and sober qualities, is sometimes, and was particularly in times like these, an organism of impulse. A sudden announcement; a brilliant and persuasive speech; powerful support coming from an unexpected quarter; panic, emotion, or excitement, and fine majorities may crumble into dust.

He could with perfect ease and candour have postponed the issue; and had he done so the danger to the Government must have been enormously increased. He resigned, however, at Christmas-time, when politicians were scattered far and wide on their holidays, when the temperature was low, and when three clear weeks intervened before the reconstructed Government would have to meet Parliament, and before he would have an opportunity of explanation.

1886 Æt. 37 It was scarcely possible to have chosen a season better suited to the interests of his colleagues or more unpromising to his own.

Then as to the ground of battle. I have tried to show that this insignificant reduction of a military vote, on which he insisted, was the peg upon which the tremendous issues of a peaceful domestic administration as against an ambitious foreign policy supported by growing armaments depended. But what a bad peg to have chosen! Granted a divergence not to be compacted between Lord Randolph and the Cabinet, how many more promising issues presented themselves! Questions of Local Government, questions of Coercion, questions of taxation, rose thorny and menacing on every side. Indeed, it is clearly evident that Lord Randolph neither formed a deliberate plan nor expected to supplant Lord Salisbury or overthrow the Government; but that, on the contrary, in so far as he was careful at all, he was more careful of their interest than of his own.

There is scarcely any more abundant source of error in history than the natural desire of writers—regardless of the overlapping and inter-play of memories, principles, prejudices and hopes, and the reaction of physical conditions—to discover or provide simple explanations for the actions of their characters. It would be a barren task to set forth the motives of this affair in a schedule. Yet the main causes emerge—shadowy perhaps, but unmistakable. Lord Randolph Churchill did not think of himself as a man, but rather as the responsible trustee and agent of the Tory Democracy; and this temper, overpowering even the most attractive personal associations, impelled him by deliberate steps—yet not without deep despondency — towards a fateful issue: and all the while a feeling, partly of sombre pride, partly of loyalty, forbade him to take the necessary and obvious steps to protect himself. Ambushes, intrigues, cabals, might suit the free-lance of Fourth Party days; but an official leader of a great party could only state the terms on which his assistance could be obtained, and, if it were not worth while to grant them, could only go.

It may no doubt be observed that this was the highest imprudence; that it agreed very little with much that he had done before, and not at all with the impression formed in the public mind. If he had put away for a season his pledges and his pride, both might have been recovered with interest later on. As it was, he delivered himself, unarmed, unattended, fettered even, to his enemies; and therefrom ensued not only his own political ruin; but grave injury to the causes he sustained. Yet it is noteworthy that he never repented of the course he had taken. Bitterly as he regretted the consequences, and felt the abuse and misrepresentation of which he was the object, and the exclusion from the fascinating and exciting life into which he had been drawn, he was not wont by word or letter to admit that he was wrong to resign, or assert that, having again the opportunity, he would do otherwise. He looked upon the action as the most exalted in his life, and as an event of which, whatever the results to himself, he might be justly proud. 'I had to do it—I could be no longer useful to them.'

It should, indeed, not escape notice that there was among the principal characters in English politics during this momentous time a high and disinterested air, very refreshing in contrast with the humiliating antics of the place-hunters and trinket-seekers who surrounded them, and more admirable than the selfish ambitions of the statesmen of a sterner age. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach refuses the Leadership of the House of Commons, and insists upon serving under a younger man who in his opinion can better fill the place. Sir Stafford Northcote in the interests of party union voluntarily effaces himself in a peerage. Lord Salisbury twice offers to be a member of a Hartington Administration, and Lord Hartington twice refuses to be the First Minister of the Crown. Sir Henry James on a matter of principle severs himself from Mr. Gladstone and refuses the Woolsack. Lastly, Mr. Chamberlain leaves the party of which he must one day have been the leader, relinquishes the great office and power he had already obtained, and, confronted at every step by distrust and pursued at every step by obloquy, sets forth upon his long, eventful pilgrimage. Among all these indications of the healthy and generous conditions of English public life, so full of honour for our race and of vindication for its institutions, the resignation of Lord Randolph Churchill need not suffer by any impartial comparison.

CHAPTER XVII

THE TURN OF THE TIDE

'The rising unto place is laborious; . . . . the standing is slippery, and the regress is either a downfall or at least an eclipse which is a melancholy thing.'—BACON.

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LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL had divested himself by a single short letter of all that authority which is centred in a political chief and a Minister of the Crown. The solid array of Conservative members who had stoutly sustained him, 'proud to follow a leader who was proud to lead them on'; the wise and busy secretaries of a great department with their hives of fact and counsel; hundreds of sharp pens, thousands of friendly voices; the vast, pervading, persisting machinery of party, all hitherto obedient in his service, now in a moment fell away. He was only the representative of a Metropolitan constituency who possessed some skill in speaking and a small house overlooking Hyde Park. He had cast away all advantages. He had neglected every preparation. He had chosen bad ground and the worst time. Moreover, as shall be seen, he had bound himself hand and foot. Yet such was the personal importance this man had acquired, so

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highly were his services valued, so much was his hostility feared, that for a time the British Government tottered and his place remained unfilled.

Mr. Chamberlain to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Highbury, Moor Green, Birmingham: December 23, 1886.

My dear Churchill,—Whew! The cat is among the pigeons with a vengeance.

My sympathies are entirely with you, and I think you may rely on my cordial co-operation, if it can be of any value.

I have to speak to-night, and must express my first thoughts on what is an entirely changed situation.

I wish I was able to communicate with you beforehand, but if you have any wishes or ideas as to immediate action let me know. If necessary we will arrange a meeting, and I will run up to London again.

The Government is doomed, and I suspect we may have to re-form parties on a new basis. You and I are equally adrift from the old organisations.

Yours ever,
J. Chamberlain.

Mr. Chamberlain to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Highbury, Moor Green, Birmingham: December 26, 1886.

My dear Churchill,—Yours of 24th with its very interesting enclosures only reached me to-day.

The breach was inevitable. There is much to be said *pro* and *con* about the estimates, but you were altogether in a false position. You had to fight—alone and single-handed—for every point, and were necessarily condemned to gain on each a partial victory, which left you with all the responsibility, but without a consistent and thoroughly defensible policy.

You will have a hard time to go through. Your case will be mine almost exactly, and I can tell you it is a bitter pilgrimage which is in prospect. The party tie is the strongest sentiment in this country—stronger than patriotism or even self-interest. But it will all come right in the end for both of us. 1886 Æt. 37

I assume that you will maintain an independent position, and in that case you will be a power that your party cannot ignore. The *Standard* has a right to be angry, and the Caucuses will denounce you; but in their hearts they know you are indispensable, and when they find they cannot bully you into submission they will come to your terms. Next time, however, that either you or I join a Cabinet we must be certain of our majority in it.

My speech has fluttered the dovecotes tremendously, and my correspondence shows that many of the Gladstonians are very uncomfortable and anxious to come to terms. But I do not believe that there will be any practical result. Mr. Gladstone does not give way on the main point—neither will I.

Whenever I come to London I will let you know, and we will have another talk. Meanwhile you have made the situation intensely interesting.

With all good wishes,
Yours sincerely,
J. Chamberlain.

Mr. Labouchere to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private. 10 Queen Anne's Gate: December 23.

Dear Churchill,—In your own interests think it over. This would have been all very well if you had not been Leader of the House, or if you had been Leader for some years. In the former case, you might have upset your friends and been Leader; in the latter case you would have become a fetish.

Parties just now do not hang together by principles. They are gangs greedy of office. You got your lot in—there is a wide difference between this and aiding in getting them out.

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You and Chamberlain seem to me both to make the same mistake. You ignore the power of the 'machine.' It has crushed many an able man—Horsman, Lowe, Goschen, and Salisbury himself.

Whether Hartington joins or not, he will not be sorry that you have resigned, and he will be all the more inclined to help the Government. They only want thirty Unionists to have a good working majority. The tendency of the Government will be to yield a little more to him in order to revenge itself on you.

Joe is of no good to you. You have no idea of the feeling of the Radicals against him. There is a good deal of sentiment in these things; and just as Gladstone is their Christ, Joe is their Anti-Christ. They will laugh to scorn his 'Grand Councils.' They are, indeed, absurd. There are only two policies for Ireland—Coercion, or a domestic legislature, &c. All else is intrigue. You are not a Radical; on that line Joe will always cut you out.

I don't think that the occasion you have selected is a good one. There is a strong public opinion, even amongst Liberals, for an expenditure on armaments. It is true that Salisbury may wish to obtain the money in order eventually to join in some absurd European war, but this cannot be proved, and the basis of politics is 'hand to mouth.'

I should have thought that your game was rather a waiting one. Sacrifice everything to becoming a fetish; then and only then, you can do as you like. Hartington must go to the Lords. There is no such thing in politics as burning boats, until there have been explanations in the House of Commons. A Conservative Government must spend, and generally a Liberal Government suffers from not spending.

I write this—not, as you will perceive, in the interests of my party, but in your individual interests. Surely when it is a question of figures, and the figures are not known, there are the elements of an arrangement.

Yours truly,
H. LABOUCHERE.

Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation had been received with universal surprise; but astonishment was swiftly succeeded by anger. His enemies—and they multiplied rapidly—raised an exultant chorus of 'I told you so!' His friends everywhere found themselves without an answer. The Unionist Press was unanimous in its censures, and the London clubs were loud in their abuse. The cohorts of tale-bearers and gossips on the flanks of a Government were eager to impute the worst and meanest motives, and his action, already difficult to vindicate, was variously attributed to temper, to treachery, and to both. The whole strength of the party organisation was exerted against him. The public was informed through a thousand channels that he had aimed a deadly blow at the Union upon an impulse of personal ambition or of personal spite. His rupture with Lord Salisbury was utter and complete. The Queen was grievously offended by his premature disclosure to the *Times*; and in the mood that was abroad he found, like Macaulay before him, that to write on Windsor Castle paper may sometimes be accounted as a crime. Yet, although he was thus the object of so much reproach, he was of course unable to defend himself. He requested permission to publish his letters of resignation. 1886 ÆT. 37

'I cannot agree,' replied Lord Salisbury by telegraph. 'It would be entirely at variance with the accepted practice, according to which such explanations should be reserved for Parliament. You clearly cannot do it without the Queen's leave.'

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'Obviously,' rejoined Lord Randolph, 'the letters have been shown to the *Standard*.'

'No,' was the answer. 'Your supposition is incorrect; the letters referred to have not been seen by anyone.'

The Prime Minister was plainly within his rights in his refusal; yet while Lord Randolph Churchill was prevented by constitutional observance from publicly anticipating the explanation to be made in Parliament, and so from making any effective reply to his traducers, that explanation was being discounted in a dozen informal versions, disparaging sometimes by lavish falsehood, sometimes by ungenerous truth.

After accepting the resignation of the Chancellor of the Exchequer Lord Salisbury turned at once to Lord Hartington. He had hitherto, as we have seen, resisted the introduction of the Whigs into the Ministry; but the situation was now critical, if not indeed desperate, and he accepted the necessity. He therefore telegraphed to Lord Hartington, who was in Rome, and invited his co-operation, offering either to make such Cabinet arrangements as might suit him and his friends, or to serve under him if he would himself undertake to form a Government. Above all, he pressed for his immediate return to England. Lord Hartington responded to these appeals without alacrity. He tarried in Rome till the night of Sunday the 26th. Thence he proceeded to Monte Carlo 'to pick up his letters.' On the 28th he resumed his journey. It was not until the evening of the 29th that he arrived in London. His deliberation was justified by events.

The Prime Minister, having collected his Cabinet together from all parts of the country, met them on Tuesday, December 28, with a statement of his views upon the situation. 'Master of tactics,' as Lord Randolph called him, he rigidly confined the dispute to the single special question of the Estimates. The Ministers responsible for the defence of the Empire demanded a certain sum. The Minister responsible for the finances had refused that sum. The head of the Government, having to choose between them, was bound as a patriot to stand by the Empire. In the face of a vast Imperial issue and of the grave crisis in European affairs, the ordinary disputations of party politics—and, indeed, all personal predilections—must stand aside. The coaling stations, on which the British fleet depended for its world-wide mobility, were at stake. To defend them or not to defend them—that was the question: and who would hesitate in his answer, especially when the sum involved was remarkably small? Such, at least, was the version semi-officially communicated to the public and faithfully reproduced in every form of artistic variation by the party press, from the *Times* newspaper to the remotest ramifications of the provincial and local journals.

Lord Salisbury also informed his colleagues that he was in communication with Lord Hartington, and he laid before them the nature of the offers he had made. The proceedings of the Cabinet were reported to be so harmonious that the *Times* and many other Ministerial journals came to the conclusion

1886 Æt. 37 that a Coalition with the Whigs was certain, and devoted many columns of print to preparing the minds of their readers for so excellent an arrangement. It was not until the next day that it dawned upon the journalistic world that numerous and influential members of the Government were very much averse on public grounds—the Empire, and, no doubt, the European crisis—from that 'wide reconstruction' which a Coalition or a Hartington Administration incidentally, but necessarily, involved. This reluctance was shared, not without reason, by the Conservative party generally, and voiced by the large number of members of Parliament whom the crisis had drawn to the Carlton Club. The Conservative party, although wanting thirty-five of an absolute majority in the House of Commons, were nevertheless by far the strongest and most compact party in the country; and they were by no means ready to acquiesce in their leader's disinterested willingness to surrender the chief place in the Administration and to work on equal terms with a party which only numbered seventy. By the time that Lord Hartington's train reached Charing Cross, on the night of the 29th, a Coalition Government had become excessively unpopular, and the *Times* was forced to admit, with a blush for the frailty of political mankind, 'that Lord Salisbury's foresight and patriotism were a good deal above the level of the rank and file.' Lord Randolph Churchill had counted upon Tory Democracy. It was not Tory Democracy that stopped the Coalition; but Tadpole and Taper.

By December 31 all prospect of a Coalition Ministry had been definitely abandoned. Lord Hartington's prudent and dignified delay had alone prevented him from being placed in a false position. During the whole of the 30th he consulted his friends and considered the reports which reached him of the temper of the Conservative party. He had no difficulty in coming to a decision. Even if the opinion of the Tory party had been as favourable as it was unfavourable, it was certain that the Liberal-Unionists were not ripe for a Coalition, and that any attempt to force them forward would lead to their disruption, and certainly end in a separation from Mr. Chamberlain and his followers. There was another obstacle—small, but not insignificant. Lord Hartington's position at Rossendale was not so secure as to make his re-election certain. A Coalition was, in fact, so difficult and undesirable that it could only be attempted in the last resort. And until Lord Salisbury's Government had been defeated in the House of Commons no one could say that all alternatives had been exhausted. Lord Hartington therefore declined, on January 1, the various propositions which Lord Salisbury had made to him.

Three courses were now, according to the *Times*, open to the Prime Minister: 'To endeavour to induce Mr. Goschen to take the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer; to come to an understanding with Lord Randolph Churchill; or to reconstruct the Ministry from the Conservative ranks.' All three were strenuously debated throughout the country. The

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idea of a reconciliation on some compromise between Lord Randolph Churchill and Lord Salisbury obtained powerful support. Rumour was tireless in formulating the terms on which peace might be made—was to be made. The *Morning Post*, always an ardent and faithful friend to Lord Randolph Churchill, never ceased to urge reunion with all the weight of its unimpeachable Toryism. Every movement of the Prime Minister and his late colleague was watched with cat-like attention. No one could call at Arlington Street or Connaught Place without the closest scrutiny; and when it became known that Lord Abergavenny, Lord Rowton and Sir Henry Wolff had visited both houses, the gossips and quidnuncs of the clubs thought the dispute as good as settled.

It was pointed out at this time that the circumstances of Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation bore a very curious resemblance to those in which Lord Palmerston had resigned the Home Secretaryship in 1853. Lord Palmerston had resigned on December 15, ostensibly on certain details of the Reform Bill. It was asserted that he differed from the Cabinet upon its policy in Eastern Europe; and this was strenuously denied by the adherents of the Ministry. Lord Palmerston's resignation was made public before he had heard that it had been accepted by the Queen. Inspired articles attacking Lord Palmerston appeared in the *Times*. Lord Derby, writing to Lord Malmesbury, observed that Lord Palmerston is 'much, and justly, annoyed' at this. 'As *his* lips are sealed, Aberdeen has no business to speak through the newspapers.' To cap all this, there were on both occasions heavy falls of snow, which made communications difficult and slow. After some days of suspense Lord Palmerston was prevailed upon to withdraw his resignation and to resume office. Would the parallel be completed?

Lord Randolph Churchill had so little expected to fail in his conflict with the Cabinet that he had not clearly thought out how he would stand in that event. Lord Salisbury's acceptance of his resignation, without interview, remonstrance, or offer of compromise, had surprised him; but he faced the situation calmly. Not to be behindhand in determination, he had clinched matters by himself publishing the news. He realised at once how serious were the consequences and how narrowed and difficult his position had become. He found himself, alone and unprepared, on ground most unfavourable; yet he did not seek to avoid the issue. He made no suggestions of reconciliation. Even after the failure of the Hartington coalition he would lend himself to no overtures. He forbade his friends to concern themselves in the affair. He rebuked Wolff with unnecessary violence for an unauthorised attempt, not ill-received by Lord Salisbury, to make peace: 'Do you think you can manage me like one of your Cairene Pashas?' During the whole fortnight that the Cabinet was in flux he abstained from the slightest action, covert or overt, which could aggravate the crisis.

1887 ÆT. 37 To remodel the Government and to allow the excitement to cool down, Ministers prorogued Parliament from January 13—the date which Lord Randolph had fixed—till January 27, and the time when an explanation could be offered was further delayed. But in face of harsher misrepresentation and abuse than has been directed against any politician since, Lord Randolph remained absolutely silent to the public. He said nothing, he did nothing: and yet there were many close observers of politics who thought more than once that all would fall back into his hands, that Lord Salisbury would be forced to invite him to rejoin upon terms or leave him to form a Government of his own.

To Chamberlain, who had spoken of him in words of warm appreciation a few days before—saying, among other things, that Lord Randolph Churchill's position in the Government had been a guarantee that they would not pursue a reactionary policy—he wrote with complete candour:—

December 24, 1886.

Your letter just received and your speech gave me equal delight. I told you that a Ministerial crisis was coming when you dined with me, but I own I did not think that I should have failed to persuade Lord S. to take a broad view of the situation. I had no choice but to go; he had been for weeks prepared for it, and possibly courted the crash. I did my best for his Government while I was in it, but I had ceased to be useful. . . . Their innate Toryism is rampant and irrepressible.

Party papers seem to think the most awful crime which a modern politician can commit is to have a spark of principle or a regard for former pledges. . . . I feel much in the dark as to the future; my position is completely *déclassé.* I hear the Carlton would like to tear me limb from limb; and yet does no blame or responsibility attach [to Lord S.?] The anxiety of the last two days has made me very seedy.

His mother had, as usual, a somewhat more hopeful account.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall: December 28, 1886.

I have as yet no news. Hartington may join. Goschen is to meet him in Paris to-morrow; it all depends whether he can be re-elected or not. Wolff is too faithful for description. I am pleased with the general tone of the Press. I expected it to be much worse. I can't bear to leave this room, where I can sit and think and hear everything quickly. The matter is very critical, but by no means desperate, and may drag on indefinitely for some days.

I am very well and in very good spirits. Please do not worry about me or put off your journey.

The pleasant party at Howth, to which he had been looking forward, must be forsaken.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Justice FitzGibbon.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: December 24, 1886.

You see my Irish hopes are shattered. I mean the Howth hopes. I have nothing to do but to keep very quiet for the moment, and pleasure is out of the question.

I hope you do not blame me hastily. It was certain to come, and delay produced danger.

I should like to tell you all about it; it is too long to write.

I feel rather seedy, as the anxiety has wearied me awfully; so do not write more.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S,W.: December 26, 1886.

I cannot manage Howth this year, though you must know what a disappointment to me it is not to join you.

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But I should be a wet-blanket altogether, and, moreover, I could not stand the 'Tutissimus.'[1] He would drive me wild with his airs of moral triumph and success.

What a time we are having! Lord S. has committed a capital blunder in again prostrating himself before Hartington. Why did he not set his back to the wall and go on, *coûte que coûte*? Still, you must not think I have any illusions about myself. In inflicting on the old gang this final fatal blow, I have mortally wounded myself. But the work is practically done; the Tory Party will be turned into a Liberal Party, and in that transformation may yet produce a powerful governing force. If not, G. O. M., Labby, anarchy &c., are triumphant.

Interesting times, my dear FitzGibbon! I wonder what old Ball says.

So far as the political world was concerned, he contented himself with writing a private letter to Mr. Akers-Douglas for the assurance of his political friends and for the information of Conservative members of Parliament who might inquire. It is remarkable that this letter has never yet been published:—

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: New Year's Day, 1887.

My dear Douglas,—Having noticed in the newspapers this morning a variety of mischievous nonsense taking the form of statements as to my reasons for quitting the Government, my views as to what would be necessary to secure my return to the Government, and suggestions as to terms of reconciliation, I think it proper in the public interest, and as much for purposes of future record as for any other more immediate object, to lay before you my views on the position.

The primary object of all government at the present moment is to maintain the Union, to maintain it not for a session or for a Parliament, but for our time. The maintenance of the Union is, to my mind, in no way a question of men, but entirely a question of measures and administration. Mr. Gladstone has identified the Liberal party with the policy of Repeal; he has behind him Scotland, Wales and Ireland, and no inconsiderable portion of England. In the event of the Conservative Government and party pursuing in the coming session a policy, foreign and domestic, which for one reason or another becomes unpopular with, and is discredited in the eyes of, that great portion of the English electorate which, after a tremendous struggle, has been kept true to the principle of the Union, the inevitable result will be that at the next election Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party will return to power, pledged to immediate Repeal, and in a position to give immediate effect to their pledge.

---

[1] Lord Ashbourne.

The composition of the present Parliament renders it a matter of no insuperable difficulty to carry on the government of the Queen for a session or two, or even longer, *tant bien que mal*; but such a proceeding, so limited and so narrow in its view, would be, to my mind, the most fallacious and dangerous of statesmanship. From the time when I joined the Government I have never taken my eyes off the next General Election. My one desire has been that Lord Salisbury should be in a position to go boldly to the country at any moment, confident of popular support. To this end every word of advice on any subject which I have ever offered him has been directed, and it was only when it was forced upon me that these views did not practically commend themselves either to him or his colleagues that I took the grave and serious step of releasing myself from all responsibility for a policy which in two or three years would, as far as human judgment may be exercised in such a matter, have led straight to Repeal.

A foreign policy which may at any moment involve this country in a European war; a domestic policy which would be marked by stagnation rather than progress; free expenditure, necessitating continued high taxation, when combined with the defence of the Union, would without doubt weigh down and crush out of all popular life that great and vital Imperial principle. Not only so, but a policy of which the above were the main characteristics not only involved so insignificant a person as myself in a marked violation of pledges given to the public, but also to all intents and purposes the entire Conservative party in the House of Commons. From 1880 to 1885 every Conservative speaker on every public platform has proclaimed, with every variety of style and paraphrase, that the Liberal party have been false to their traditions, and that 'Peace, Retrenchment and Reform' could only be practically given effect to by the Tories. Nor can it be doubted that this persistent iteration of a political position which, so far as the Liberals were concerned, could be demonstrated by facts, produced an immense effect upon the masses in the great English towns. Should, however, the results of a year or two of Tory government show that the accusations against the Tory party so constantly made by the Liberals—namely, that the Tory party are the war party, that they are the extravagant party, that they are the do-nothing and obstructive party—can be demonstrated by actual facts and events, it seems certain that the great town electorate, which we have had so much trouble in winning, will sway back violently to the Liberal party, their earlier love, and that the disaster of 1880 will be repeated on a larger scale and with more deadly effect.

To avert such a disaster there is nothing I would not do, nothing I would not sacrifice; but if the catastrophe must come, I will not that anyone shall be able to say that any large portion of responsibility rested upon me.

It was if possible by a desperate effort (so profoundly was I convinced of the magnitude of the peril into which the Tory Government and party were drifting by looking too much to tiding over the difficulties of the moment, and not at all to the next General Election) to rouse my friends to a sense of the position that I resigned my office and incurred

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with much equanimity the tornado of slander, obloquy and every variety of misrepresentation that friends, and possibly even colleagues, have let loose upon me.

I seek for no re-entry into the present Government; I decline to commence any undignified or unworthy bargaining and huckstering as to the terms of reconciliation; but this I say—that if by any coalition, fusion or reconstruction a Government is formed which by its composition and its policy will be an earnest and a guarantee to the country that a period of peaceful progressive administration has in reality set in, I would serve that Government with the utmost loyalty in any capacity, however humble, either as a member or a follower, only too glad that by any sacrifice or any action of mine I might possibly have averted danger to the State.

Furthermore, this I add: that whatever course the Prime Minister may take at this moment, he need not for one moment fear the smallest opposition, direct or indirect, from me, in Parliament or in the country. I shall make no further attempt to defend my action, lest by any such attempt I might, even by one iota, increase the difficulties which surround him; but, recognising to the full my great fallibility of judgment, I shall watch silently and sadly the progress of events.

Believe me to be
Very sincerely yours,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

r. Chamberlain's comment was characteristic :—

Highbury, Moor Green, Birmingham: January 3, 1887.

My dear Churchill,—I return your very interesting Memorandum. If I had been you I do not think I should have added the last paragraph. When a man says that in no case will he return a blow, he is very likely to be cuffed.

However, I dare say Lord Salisbury will not take you too literally at your word, and will avoid any extreme test of your most Christian disposition.

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I heard before I left that Goschen was likely to join. He will certainly carry no one else with him, but he may be able to commit Hartington to a more unqualified support than he would otherwise have given to a purely Tory Government.

I understood that one cause of his hesitation was his fear that you would be actively hostile, if he took your place. Probably he has since been reassured by a sight of your letter to Akers-Douglas.

I do not know yet whether anything will come of negotiations between the Gladstonians and the Radical Unionists. I never felt less like 'a surrender' in my life, and Labouchere and his crew may put what interpretation they like on the matter, but they will not be able to show that I have advanced one iota from the position of my telegram to the Unionist meeting, extended as it was by my speech in Birmingham.

The future is still obscure to me, but the game is exceedingly interesting at this moment.

Yours sincerely,
J. Chamberlain.

Another explanation was not neglected:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Sir Henry Ponsonby.

2 Connaught Place, W.: January 13, 1887.

Dear Sir Henry Ponsonby,—I saw His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to-day, and from an observation which he made I learnt for the first time on authority that the publication of the news of my resignation took place before the matter had been made the subject of official communication to Her Majesty, and that in so far as my action was responsible for such publicity the Queen had cause for displeasure with me.

I am much grieved at this news, and anxious to place on record the facts bearing upon the matter as they are known to me. On Thursday, December 18, I had a long conversation with Lord Salisbury, in which I intimated to him that the expenditure proposed for the Army and Navy was considerably higher than what I could be responsible for in view of my reiterated public pledges as to the necessity for and possibility of retrenchment. On Monday, the 20th, I had a long conversation with the Secretary of State for War, and a written communication from the First Lord of the Admiralty which confirmed me in the views which I had communicated to Lord Salisbury on the previous Thursday.

On Monday, the 20th, in the evening, I wrote from Windsor to Lord Salisbury intimating my desire to withdraw from the Government.

It would have been a source of immense relief to me if I had been able to acquaint Her Majesty with what was passing when I had the honour of dining at Windsor, but my great want of experience of official life led me to believe that had I initiated so grave a matter in the conversation which Her Majesty was graciously pleased to hold with me I should have been guilty of a most unusual breach of etiquette and of Ministerial practice and decorum: all the more as no opening presented itself for bringing up the subject, though in truth my mind was entirely absorbed by it.

Lord Salisbury received my letter early Tuesday morning, the 21st, and no answer from him reached me till eight o'clock on Wednesday evening—a considerable interval, remembering the proximity of Hatfield either to Windsor or London. Lord Salisbury's answer was of a most definite character, accepting my resignation; and bearing in mind the interval which had elapsed, I made perfectly certain that the fullest communications on the subject had passed between Her Majesty and Lord Salisbury, and that Lord Salisbury's answer was written with Her Majesty's knowledge. In fact, it never crossed my mind that the reverse could be the case, and I thought myself justified in no longer making any secret of the fact that I no longer had the honour of belonging to the Government. If I erred in this, it was from ignorance and from misunderstanding, and not the least from design; and I would be intensely distressed

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if it might be supposed that by any action of mine I had been wanting in that profound respect to Her Majesty which it is the high and grateful duty of all to render, and which Her Majesty's most gracious treatment of myself on several occasions doubly and trebly imposed upon me.

Perhaps indeed I am doing wrong in making you this communication. If so, I trust to your kindness to inform me on the subject before making any use of this letter.

Believe me to be
Yours very truly,
Randolph S. Churchill.

The reply was frigid :—

Sir Henry Ponsonby to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Osborne : January 15, 1887.

Dear Lord Randolph,—The Queen has read your letter relating to the announcement of your resignation before it had been accepted by Her Majesty ; and commands me to thank you for your explanation.

Yours very truly,
Henry Ponsonby.

It was about this time, when many from whom he might have expected service were falling away, that Lord Randolph received the sympathy and support of an able man with whom during the next four years he was to be associated, and from whom he was ultimately destined to part in very gloomy circumstances. Mr. Louis Jennings, the Conservative member for Stockport and a full-blooded Fair Trader, looked upon 'Tory Democracy' as a living political faith. He was a man of strong character and extensive information who had reached the House of Commons late in life, after a varied career. He had travelled widely, and had taken an active part in the politics of other countries than his own. As the editor of the *Times of India* he had been largely concerned in the agitation which had led to the suppression of the Juggernaut ceremonial. With the *New York Times* as his weapon he had broken up, by a prolonged and pitiless audit of their accounts, the Tammany Ring in 1871; and, after a struggle in which his life was said to be in danger, he had hunted the notorious 'Boss' Tweed to the gaol in which he died. Taught alike by experience and study, a man of action and a writer, Mr. Jennings was well fitted to become an effective political force, and, as the editor of the Croker papers, he did not lack recognition in the world of letters. He now made himself known to Lord Randolph Churchill in a style which expresses the sincerity of his feelings and reveals the slenderness of their acquaintance:—

73 Elm Park Gardens, S.W.: December 31, 1886.

My Lord,—At a time when all the busybodies and nobodies in the country are thrusting advice upon you I am very reluctant to appear to join the throng. I hope, however, you will permit me to assure you that I have tried to keep my own constituency from committing the gross injustice of condemning a man before he is heard. For my own part, it will take a great deal to convince me that in the great sacrifices you have made, and the grave responsibilities you have incurred, you have not been actuated by a high sense of duty and by the purest and best motives. If this be so—as I feel sure it is—there will be a reaction against all this wild clamour, and the people will do you justice.

I am, my Lord,
Yours very truly,
L. J. Jennings.

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Lord Hartington's determination having been made public, Lord Salisbury next turned to Mr. Goschen. Mr. Goschen's position was different and distinct from that of Lord Hartington. He was not tied to any particular constituency, and in respect of a seat could avail himself of the large resources of the Conservative party. He had for several years been out of tune with Liberal policy and, more than any other Whig, he had been alarmed and estranged by the growing influence of Radicalism. He had not joined the Government of 1880, and he was free alike from responsibility for its failures and resentment towards its assailants. Lord Hartington was the leader of a party with the obligations and restrictions of leadership. Mr. Goschen was eminent, but detached. Moreover, his high financial authority would strengthen the Government at the very point where it had been most seriously weakened. He was now invited to go to the Treasury, and it was generally believed that, whatever temporary arrangements were made, the leadership in the Commons would soon devolve upon him.

Mr. Goschen nevertheless showed some hesitation in joining the Government. To participate in a regular coalition in company with political friends wore a different complexion from entering the Cabinet of the opposite political party alone. He desired most strongly to preserve his relations with Lord Hartington and his character as a Liberal; and even when reassured on these points he stipulated that two other Whigs should be included in the Cabinet to give him countenance and support. Places were thereupon offered to Lord Northbrook and Lord Lansdowne. But at this the Conservative party, so far as it was represented by the Carlton Club, again showed such disapproval that these peers felt it their duty to decline office, and in the end Mr. Goschen was fain to join without them. For the rest, Mr. Smith became First Lord of the Treasury, with the leadership of the House of Commons; Stanhope took the War Office and Sir Henry Holland the Colonies; while Lord Salisbury himself assumed, none too soon, the direction of foreign affairs.

Mr. Goschen's acceptance of office definitely put an end to the Cabinet crisis. 'The new Chancellor of the Exchequer,' observed the *Times* tartly, 'will take Lord Randolph Churchill's place in more senses than one.' The Government was completely reconstituted, and no expectation of overtures or reconciliation could be entertained. It has in consequence often been represented that this appointment was to Lord Randolph a contingency utterly unforeseen. The saying, so often attributed to him, 'I forgot Goschen,' is interpreted as a key to deep designs. In an elaborate calculation he had overlooked a vital factor. In the moment of success he was ruined by an inexplicable neglect. The evidence upon these pages does not sustain this view. He marshalled no forces against the Prime Minister. With an imprudence born of repeated success, he prepared no combination, either of circumstances or men, to support his demands. He went into battle without allies or armour. He set his unaided personal power

—as he had often done before—to back his opinions, and awaited the issue with an easy mind. He had not, of course, considered Mr. Goschen's financial reputation in connection with a vacancy at the Exchequer; but, so far from forgetting Mr. Goschen himself, he was constantly solicitous for him. A Coalition with all or any of the Whigs had been for three years his consistent and persistent aim. After the election of 1885 he was willing to resign, that Mr. Goschen might join the Administration. In his memorandum written before the first meeting of Parliament in 1886 he again strongly pressed upon Lord Salisbury that places should be offered to the Whigs, including Mr. Goschen. In November he was concerned that Mr. Goschen should be elected to Parliament and urged Lord Salisbury to put him forward for a seat which might soon be vacant. And lastly, on December 18, two days before his letter of resignation, when the dispute in the Cabinet was at its height, both Lord Salisbury and Mr. Goschen were his guests at a dinner the avowed object of which was to bring them together. However decisive, however disastrous to Lord Randolph the inclusion of Mr. Goschen in the Government at this time may have been, it was no surprise; for he had always been its advocate. It was not fatal to his schemes; for there were no schemes.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Dunraven.

2 Connaught Place, W.: January 12, 1887.

My dear Dunraven,—I consider honestly that you are quite as good a judge as to what the political position requires from moderate progressive politicians as I am. You have seen all the correspondence between me and Lord Salisbury, as well as my letter to Akers-Douglas, about which last Lord S. says it makes the breach unbridgeable. Therefore my explanation, when it comes, will add little or nothing to your knowledge.

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With respect to persons like * * *, * * *, &c., whom I look upon as my friends, I have been most careful to check any tendency to follow my example, for resignation might be fatal to their political career, on which they depend almost for social existence, and I was most fearful of any responsibility attaching to me for having led them to extinction.

With you I feel in a different position. You have a social and political position of your own, which the holding of a minor office in the Government by no means enhances, and which the loss of such an office would by no means affect.

Tory Democracy may be a bad name, but it represents to you and me and many more certain distinct political principles which you and I hold very strongly. That those principles are in the utmost peril just now there can be no doubt. We know what Lord Salisbury is, and we know what Goschen is, and we know that our views are regarded by both with unrelenting distrust and aversion.

On the whole, I think you are in a position to try a bold course; and you must not undervalue your strength in the country, where you are well known, followed by many, and greatly regarded by all. However, let us talk it over this afternoon at the Carlton.

Yours ever,
Randolph S. C.

Eventually Lord Dunraven decided to resign the office which he held, of Under-Secretary for the Colonies; but his partnership with Lord Randolph

1887 Churchill proved in the end more noticeable at Newmarket than at Westminster.
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Perhaps some day it may be possible to publish in a complete form the letters, some of which have been quoted in these pages, which passed between Lord Salisbury and Lord Randolph Churchill during their eventful association. Although the period scarcely extended above two years, the correspondence would attain considerable dimensions. Yet the reader would be wise to persevere; for when we consider the easy yet forceful pens employed; the profound and secret knowledge of political movements and forces at work which both possessed; the importance, range and fascinating variety of subjects; the changing relationships and antagonisms of the writers; above all, the free and candid style of their intercourse—whether in regard to men or things—one cannot imagine any compilation which would more truthfully illuminate the dark and stormy history of those times. All that, however, is a matter for the future. Such as it had been, the correspondence was now to close, for hardly any communication—and that only of a formal nature—was desired on either side in the years which followed. Nevertheless, its conclusion was not unworthy.

Lord Iddesleigh had been apparently forgotten in the reconstruction of the Cabinet. In the strife and excitement of these harsh days this unwarlike figure had dropped out of men's minds. Lord Salisbury's assumption of the Foreign Office necessarily displaced him; and he was, perhaps not unreasonably, offended to read the first news of it in the daily papers of January 12. It was said by the wags that 'Randolph had driven him from the House of Commons in his rise, and from the Cabinet in his fall.' Tragedy, never very far behind the curtain, came forward swiftly on the heels of this. That same afternoon Lord Iddesleigh called upon Lord Salisbury at Downing Street, and, being overtaken in the anteroom by the heart disease from which he had so long been afflicted, he expired in the presence of the Prime Minister.

The disputes between Lord Randolph Churchill and Sir Stafford Northcote have been very fully recorded in this story; and I fear their harsh features cannot truthfully be softened or smoothed away. They must be judged as a whole and in relation to the circumstances of the time. Here is the last word upon them:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

2 Connaught Place, W.: January 13, 1887.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—Athough a great and wide political difference has separated me from you officially, I cannot refrain (even possibly at the risk of being misunderstood) from writing you a line to express how greatly I grieve for the shock you must have experienced owing to the melancholy occurrence of yesterday afternoon. It seems very hard on you that this grave event should have come now to add its own weight to the many other troubles and worries which circumstances purely political have occasioned.

I felt much the old Lord's death, for he had for years past gone through much bother, disappointment, and probably

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vexation, nor can I conveniently repress the reflection *quorum pars magna fui.* But this I can say from my own knowledge, consisting of the recollection of many facts and conversations, that never in public life did any man have a truer friend and colleague than Lord Iddesleigh had in you; and certainly if rewards, honours and the praise of men are sources of satisfaction, Lord Iddesleigh enjoyed them in a fuller measure than any other contemporary, and that he did so I consider to be mainly owing to the unwavering loyalty with which you invariably supported him, checked all depreciation, and stimulated constant recognition of his public services.

I like to place this on record, though possibly it may be deemed somewhat presumptuous, for it has been my fortune in the last two or three years to see as much almost perhaps as anyone into the inner and more concealed working of our party life.

Believe me to be, with much sympathy,
Yours most sincerely,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Hatfield House, Hatfield, Herts: January 14, 1887.

My dear Randolph,—I am very grateful for the kind sympathy expressed in your letter of yesterday, and very much touched by it. Your testimony to my bearing towards our old friend in the past is thoughtful and generous.

It was a very painful scene that I witnessed on Wednesday in Downing Street. I had never happened to see anyone die before—and therefore, even apart from the circumstances, the suddenness of this unexpected death would have been shocking. But here was, in addition, the thought of our thirty years' companionship in political life; and the reflection that now, just before this sudden parting, by some strange misunderstanding which it is hopeless to explain, I had, I believe for the first time in my life, seriously wounded his feelings. As I looked upon the dead body stretched before me I felt that politics was a cursed profession.

I have received very kind and considerate letters from his family.

Thanking you again for the thoughtfulness of your letter,

Believe me

Yours very truly,

SALISBURY.

As the time for the meeting of Parliament drew near, it was necessary for Lord Randolph to think very carefully upon the explanation he would offer for the unexpected events of the Recess. Circumstances complex and adverse made his position one of extreme disadvantage. It was hardly possible for him to move in any direction without estranging friends or exposing himself to enemies.

The spirit of his differences with Ministers was vital, but the actual matter in dispute could only be regarded as trivial. Two courses therefore presented themselves at the outset: either to fight on the large ground of the unsatisfied aspirations of Tory Democracy, as set forth in his letter to Mr. Akers-Douglas, or upon the small ground of the Estimates. The first involved a downright assault upon the Conservative Government, an irreparable breach with its leaders, and the breaking of many old friendships and associations. The second whittled the difference down to a question of not very important figures, on which Parliament must soon decide. The one promised a chance of successful strife, the other offered a prospect of reconciliation; the one led soon into very deep waters, the other lay among the shallows. But, in all respects save one, the first was

1887 the path of courage, of consistency and perhaps of
ÆT. 37 prudence also. It suited his nature. It freed his hands. It justified and explained his action in a manner which the people could easily understand. 'I fondly hoped to make the Conservative party the instrument of Tory Democracy. It was "an idle schoolboy's dream." I must look elsewhere.'

No doubt that was the road to tread. It might have ended in Liberalism; but from that he would not at a later date have shrunk. Chamberlain and Rosebery were better friends to him personally and politically than Smith or Hamilton or Balfour could ever be. To act with the Conservative party meant political paralysis, perhaps for years. To stand independently, or upon a moderate Liberal platform, putting away once and for all any thought of reconciliation, meant usefulness, support and growing power. But one great barrier interposed. The Union was a cause to which he was pledged, not only by memorable votes and speeches; but by profound and unalterable conviction.

So this first course, with its various chances, was forbidden. The second was scarcely more satisfactory and far less congenial. In whatever proportion he restricted the dispute to a mere question of expenditure, he deprived himself of the power of defending his resignation, and therefore weakened his position with the country. To fight on finance alone, when the other differences were known to his late colleagues, looked like repentance and admission of error. It was a course which counted on generosity where generosity was lacking; which counted on gratitude for past services, while in politics present and proximate utility is mainly considered; and it was a course requiring in an unusual degree patience and restraint. But, so far as outside influences could avail, this course was made easy for him. His friends and his family besought him not to break with his party. Ministers addressed him in terms uniformly friendly and considerate. 'The subject on which he parted from us,' wrote Lord Salisbury to the Duchess of Marlborough on January 11, 'is one which the House of Commons must decide one way or the other very shortly, and no one would dispute that its decision, once gained, must be accepted. After that it will be quite open to Randolph to rejoin this or any other Conservative Ministry as soon as opportunity occurs.'

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And Mr. Smith on the 13th :—

> You have a perfect right to hold the views you expressed to me in my room. I differed then and now from you, but it may turn out that you are right and that I am wrong, and I shall accept a demonstration of that fact without the very slightest personal annoyance.
>
> But, however that may be, all that has happened is an incident in the career of a young politician of quite a temporary character, and, unless my life is cut short as Northcote's has been, I look forward with confidence to a future—and the sooner it comes the better—when I shall be in the retirement I long for, and you will be leading a great party with prudence and firmness and courage.

Lord Randolph chose to follow the second course; he avowed himself an independent supporter of the Government, and his formal request for permission to explain made no allusion to differences on foreign policy or legislation.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Salisbury.

2 Connaught Place, W.: January 18, 1887.

Dear Lord Salisbury,—May I ask you to be so kind as to obtain for me Her Majesty's permission to make to the House of Commons the necessary explanation of my reasons for quitting the Government? I purpose, if this permission is granted, to state briefly the nature and amount of the expenditure to which I objected, to answer with equal brevity certain precipitate criticisms on that resignation to which many Members of Parliament and much of the Press are committed, and to conclude by reading the three letters which passed between us, viz. mine of the 20th, yours of the 22nd, and my reply of the same date.

Believe me to be
Very truly yours,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Lord Salisbury to Lord Randolph Churchill.

10 Downing Street, Whitehall: January 19, 1887.

My dear Randolph,—In pursuance of a message I got from you through Douglas I asked and obtained the requisite permission when I was at Osborne the other day. The form in which you propose to give your explanation seems to me quite correct.

Believe me
Yours very sincerely,
Salisbury.

Mr. Goschen having failed to secure election at Liverpool, Parliament met upon January 27 without a Chancellor of the Exchequer. The Speaker had indicated the proper time for explanation; and when Lord Randolph Churchill rose, immediately after the notices of motion, from the second bench above the gangway, the appearance of the House was a proof of the interest with which that explanation was awaited. He followed punctiliously the course he had indicated in his letter to the Prime Minister; and his tone, though a little sarcastic, was not at all unfriendly to the Government. As a statement his speech was unexceptionable in all respects; as an explanation it was necessarily inadequate. Little was added to the knowledge of the public; and although the calm antagonism of the letters on both sides was not without its effect upon the House, the general feeling when he sat down was of disappointment. This impression, which was deepened by a most dreary fog which invaded the chamber, found abundant record in the prints of next day.

He spoke again three days later in the debate on the Address, following, as it happened, in succession to Mr. Bradlaugh. Preserving throughout a jaunty air of independence, he nevertheless made it perfectly clear that he intended to remain a supporter of the Union and of the Conservative Administration. He derided the Plan of Campaign, and defended and eulogised, with humour and effect, the policy of the Chief Secretary, who had been, as usual, assailed by the violence of one Irish party and by the suspicions of the other, and who was, moreover, suffering from the severe affection of the eyes which was soon to necessitate his retirement. He pointed out that the Procedure proposals, for which he had been personally so much attacked, were in precisely the same form as when he resigned, and that the legislative programme of the gracious Speech 'bore a strong family resemblance to that set forth in a certain speech made in Kent not long ago.'

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He noticed the revival of the old paragraph that the Estimates had been framed *with due regard to economy and efficiency.* 'They must have been greatly altered,' he observed, 'since I left the Cabinet.' He spoke, in characteristic words—the truth of which has not been impaired by time—of the difficulties which the House of Commons encounters in any attempt to control or even criticise expenditure.

But the passage of greatest significance referred to the Chamberlain overtures and negotiations with the Gladstonian Liberals, which were at that time taking the form of the celebrated Round Table Conference. 'I notice,' he said, 'a tendency of the party of the Union to attach too much importance to precarious Parliamentary alliances, which are as transient and uncertain as the shifting wind, and too little to the far more important question how to keep the English people at the back of the party of the Union. When I was in the Government I made it my constant thought and desire to make things as easy as possible for the Liberal-Unionists, to introduce such measures as they might conscientiously support as being in accordance with their general principles, and to make such electoral arrangements as might enable them to preserve their seats. But I frankly admit that I regarded the Liberal-Unionists as a useful kind of crutch, and I looked forward to the time, and no distant time, when the Tory party might walk alone, strong in its own strength and conscious of its own merits; and it is to the Tory party, and solely to the Tory party, that I looked for the maintenance of the Union.' He went on to say that Mr. Chamberlain, in these negotiations, was pursuing 'an erroneous and mistaken course.' 'The Tory party will, I think, never follow a line of policy which by any reasonable construction can create in Dublin anything in the nature of an Irish Parliament. That is our clear position, from which, under no pretence of local self-government, shall we depart; and it would be well for the right honourable gentleman the Member for Birmingham, who is now indulging in such extraordinary gyrations, to recognise that, whatever schemes of Home Rule for Ireland may commend themselves to him, they are not, under any circumstances, likely to commend themselves to members on this side of the House.'

These somewhat discursive observations were in themselves brilliantly successful and were heard by the House with keen pleasure and attention. 'Very many thanks for last night,' wrote Beach; 'you are a good friend.' But in spite of this, and although the intervention attracted so much notice from subsequent speakers as to excite the remark that the debate proceeded less upon the Queen's Speech than upon Lord Randolph Churchill's, it cannot be called well conceived. The weak, and at the same time the strong, point was the 'crutch.' Those who were independent of such support laughed and laughed again; but the Liberal-Unionist members, and those who owed their seats to Liberal-Unionist votes, were at once offended and alarmed. Although

1887 Æt. 37 intended in a spirit of sober candour, it had about it a suspicion of reckless mischief, which his many opponents were not slow to turn to profit. Mr. Chaplin belaboured him vigorously in reply. The Unionist newspapers adopted uniformly an attitude of solemn rebuke; and while Government speakers in a long succession denounced or deplored such disrespect of loyal allies, Mr. Jennings alone among his friends was able to offer an effective defence. Moreover, the Liberal-Unionists at this stage of their transition were the natural and legitimate associates of a Democratic Tory. They looked to the progressive elements in the Conservative party to make the Unionist alliance easy in Parliament and to give them countenance in the constituencies. Their leaders were far from being unsympathetic to the cause of economy; and Chamberlain especially, who had shown himself willing and anxious to co-operate in various ways, and whose position at this time was difficult, delicate and insecure, had, it must be admitted, good grounds for his complaint.

Mr. Chamberlain to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Private. 40 Prince's Gardens, S.W.: February 2, 1887.

My dear Churchill,—Why will you insist on being an Ishmael—your hand against every man? Why did you go out of your way on Monday to attack me?

You know that I am the mildest of men, but I have a strong inclination to hit out at those who strike me, and my experience teaches me that no private friendship can long resist the effect of public contest.

You and I have plenty of enemies. Is it not possible for us each to pursue his own way without coming into personal conflict?

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Surely we shall have our hands fully occupied without tearing out each other's eyes.

Yours sincerely,
J. CHAMBERLAIN.

Lord Randolph seems to have realised that there was for the moment nothing that he could usefully do; and on the morrow of his speech he came suddenly to a decision:—

To his Mother.

2 Connaught Place, W.: February 2, 1887.

After great reflection and balancing of everything I have decided upon a little holiday abroad and am off to-morrow night. I shall be away, I expect, about six weeks, and H. Tyrwhitt and I contemplate going to Algiers, Tunis, Malta, Palermo, Naples, and so home. It will, I think, be a grand rest for me, and good for the nerves. I don't see that I can do any good by hanging on here day after day. The Address will go on for a long time; then will come Procedure, then Coercion; so that when I come back they will not be much further ahead than they are now. I think my speech last night did a lot of good, and H. Chaplin's violent attack shows how much the enemy is alarmed. I am told H. C. did not go down very well, and Jennings answered him capitally. George[1] will watch after my interests, and I shall ask him to take charge of my correspondence.

I have no information as to what is passing inside Ministerial circles, but I have an instinctive feeling that all is not right and that they will come to grief. Beach was very grateful to me for what I said about him.

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[1] Viscount Curzon, M.P. for South Buckinghamshire.

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I wish I could have seen you before going, for a farewell talk over everything. I have a lot to do to put things in order and to get ready.

To Chamberlain he wrote (February 3) in amicable terms, not withdrawing in any way from his discouragement of the Round Table Conference, but indicating his difficulties and announcing his project. 'I do not think I said anything which ought even to ruffle our private friendship, which—though it may seem a paradox to say so—is one of the chief and few remaining attractions of political life. For the moment I am quite tired and worn out. "Many dogs have come about me, and the council of the wicked layeth siege against me." Therefore I seek a temporary refuge and repose in a flight to the south and to the sun.'

His friends, for the most part, thought him right to go. 'Be of good cheer,' wrote the warm-hearted Jennings; 'you are by no means alone. As for the men whom you have put into office, or who would not be in office but for you, their conduct makes me sick. I am very glad you are going away for rest and change. It will give time for events to shape themselves; and when you are gone, you will be missed, and kinder feelings will enter into the consideration of your position. You could not do much good just now, and anything that went wrong would be laid on your shoulders. You will come back in time to save both party and Ministry from the consequences of their own incapacity. My deepest sympathies will always be with you in your unequal, but just and honourable, struggle.

I would stake my life upon your ultimate success.' Sometimes, perhaps, these wagers are accepted.

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The next night—February 3—Lord Randolph left England, and I shall not offer to the reader other accounts of his wanderings than his own.

To his Wife.

February 9, 1887: Hôtel Régence, Algiers.

. . . . It is certainly very pleasant getting away from the cold and worry of London. I have hardly given two thoughts to politics since I left; but I wonder whether there is still much carping going on against me, or whether my flight has disarmed my enemies.

To his Mother.

Biskra: February 15, 1887.

I suppose this will find you back in London. I was so glad to get your letter, long and interesting, from the Castle. I expect you must have found it pleasant there on the whole. If anything could remove any lingering doubts I may have had as to the prudence of leaving the Government, it would be the charm of this place, which I should not have experienced except for that rather strong proceeding.

The weather is beautiful—the air quite cold, and the sun not too hot. We shall remain here till the end of the week. Harry Tyrwhitt is a most amiable companion, and possesses the additional qualification of being fond of chess, so we are never at a loss to pass the time.

We had a long drive from Batna, twelve hours, but through an attractive and varied country. This place is right in the true desert, and is a great grove of palm-trees of all sorts, shapes and sizes, difficult to get to, but well worth the trouble. In another two years they will have finished the railway right up to here, and then the quiet of the place will probably be spoilt.

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We shall leave Friday or Saturday for Constantine, and then on to Tunis. I saw in a French paper that Goschen had got in, but it did not give the numbers. However, I confess I do not think much of politics, and rejoice over my freedom and idleness—which I hope will not shock you.

To his Mother.

Constantine: February 21, 1887.

I was so glad to find here, on arrival last night, your two letters of the 10th and 12th. I read and pondered very carefully all you wrote about what Ashbourne said. But I do not think there will ever be any question of my rejoining the present Government. When the old gang with their ideas are quite played out and proved to be utter failures, then, perhaps, people will turn to the young lot. Till this time comes, and I do not think it is far off, I must wait patiently. I consider my position a very good one, and, though it may seem a strange thing to say, better than if I was in my old place in the Government. I am not mixed up or responsible for their policy or their proceedings, which are, I think, faulty and feeble and hopelessly inadequate to what the times require. I am very glad Dunraven resigned. He is a man of considerable importance, and has made a position for himself with the working men.

I am so glad you liked Ireland, and I delight to hear of Castlereagh's success. I always felt sure he was admirably fitted for the post. George writes me invaluable reports on House of Commons affairs. I should like to form a Government, if only to give him a real good place; his letters are most able. If you are giving any little dinners, I wish you would ask Jennings, M.P. He is a very clever man, and would interest you.

This is certainly a pleasant and amusing country to travel in, if only the hotels were a little better. The weather, though bright, is not warm, and I wear thick clothes, as in England.

We go to Tunis to-morrow. I am feeling very well, I am thankful to say, and keep blessing my stars I am not in the House of Commons. If people only knew how little official life really attracts me, they would judge one's actions differently.

To his Wife.

Tunis: February 25, 1887.

We have decided to go on to Palermo to-night, for there is no other boat till to-day week; and if it was stormy weather then, we should have to cross whether we liked it or no—whereas now the weather is beautiful and calm, so we take advantage of it to get over the Mediterranean and hope to arrive at Palermo Saturday evening. . . . This is a more interesting place than any we have yet seen—much more truly Eastern. The old native bazaar is delightfully curious. I bought you a few pieces of stuff which will serve to cover cushions or to make portières. Having once seen the town, there is nothing much more to see, and I do not know how we should pass a week here. . . . We passed through much beautiful country coming here from Constantine; it is all well worth seeing. Last night we went to see Aïss Sawa, an extraordinary troop of fanatic Arabs who dance and yell, cut themselves with swords, and eat nails, broken glass and scorpions. I think there is a good deal of humbug and trickery in it; but it was very curious and very barbarous, and for noise a pandemonium. . . .

To his Wife.

Palermo: March 2, 1887.

I have to-day got hold of a whole week's file of the *Times*, down to the 25th, which has posted me up in political matters. I think the Government are earning a rather second-rate kind of *succès d'estime*, but I fancy I detect signs of feebleness and inefficiency, which will become obvious when real difficulty arises. I own W. H. Smith has done better than I expected, for I expected a complete

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breakdown; but, having made that admission, his speeches read to me most commonplace, and I think before long the House and the party will get much bored with him. I am amused at the Government surrender about my Army and Navy Estimates Committee in reply to a question from George C.[1] I expect the Burnley election quickened their sluggish economic impulses. The election I look upon as very significant, and as bearing out what I wrote to A. Douglas. They may plod on in Parliament, but they are losing their hold on the imagination and enthusiasm of the country generally. However, all this is speculation. In any case, I am in no hurry to come home—and am, too, thankful I went away. Really I have had a nice time hitherto. . . .

To his Mother.

Messina: March 9.

Here we are, caught like rats in a trap. Just as we were packing up yesterday to leave for Naples it was announced that on account of cholera at Catania quarantine had been imposed in Sicily, and that we could not leave. This is a great blow, for we do not know how long we may be detained here. There is nothing to see or do, and the hotel is dirty and uncomfortable. We are in despair. . . .

To his Wife.

Naples: March 12, 1887.

I send you the enclosed under what the Foreign Office calls 'Flying Seal,' which means you are to read it and send it on; it will tell you of our proceedings. At last we have got here, but without either servants or luggage; goodness knows when they will come. Harry T. and I made up our minds we would not stand being detained prisoners indefinitely at Messina. We made a fruitless application to the Ambassador at Rome to be exempted from quarantine; all regular steamboats had been taken off, and even if we had got a passage we should have had to do five days' quarantine at Gaeta—a horrible prospect. So we went to the Consul—a character he is! He introduced us to a man who knew a man who knew some Sicilian fishermen who for a consideration would put us across the Straits. *Nous n'avons fait ni un ni deux*, but pursued the project. We embarked in an open boat at eight o'clock on Wednesday evening in Messina harbour, with nothing but a tiny bag and a rug, with a dissolute sort of half-bred Englishman and Sicilian, to act as interpreter and guide, and six wild, singing, chattering Sicilian fishermen. We reached the Calabrian coast about 9.30; but the difficulty was to find a landing-place where there were no gendarmes or coastguards or inhabitants awake. The last danger was the greatest, for the peasantry are awfully superstitious about cholera, and are a wild, savage people; and we might have had rough treatment if any number of them happened to see us.

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[1] Viscount Curzon, February 21. *Hansard*, 311, 179.

At last we found a little fishing village where all was quiet. In we ran, out we jumped, and off went the boat like lightning. After clambering up some precipitous rocks, fortunately without waking anyone or breaking our necks, we found temporary shelter in a miserable inn, where we represented ourselves as having come by boat from Reggio, and being unable to get back on account of the strong Sirocco wind which was blowing. We had to wait about an hour here all alone, with two wild men and a wild woman, while our guide was quietly endeavouring to find a conveyance. At last he got a common cart, and about eleven o'clock we started for the house of an Englishman at San Giovanni who has a silk mill, and to whom we had a letter from the Consul. The innkeeper and his companions asked a lot of tiresome questions and seemed very suspicious, but in the end let us go quietly. Just after starting we met two gendarmes, and afterwards two coastguards, but fortunately they asked no questions; so everything went well for some four or five miles, except for the awful jolting of the cart, which exceeded anything in the way of shaking you ever dreamt of. All of a sudden the peasant who was driving the mule ran the cart against a great stone, and sent us all flying into the road. I never saw such a sprawling spill. Fortunately we were only shaken and dirty, but the driver was much hurt, which served him right, and he groaned and moaned terribly for the remainder of the journey; being a big fat man, he had fallen heavily, and I should not be surprised if he had since died.

At last, at one in the morning, we reached the house we were looking for, and had a great business to awaken the people; nor did we know how we should be received, arriving in so strange a manner. The Englishman, however, was very good, took us in, gave us supper, and we lay quiet until the evening of the following day, when we slipped into the direct train for this place, which we reached without further trouble. But what a thing it is to have an evil conscience! I kept thinking that every station-master and gendarme on the road scrutinised us unnecessarily; and what a trouble and scandal it would have made if we had been arrested and put in prison! However, all is well that ends well, and I had the delight of finding an immense bundle of letters from you and others at the post here. We had to buy shirts and socks and everything, for we were without change of any kind; and what the hotel people here thought of us I cannot imagine. But they were civil and made no remark. Our quarters are very comfortable after the filth of Messina, and I think that our journey was adventurous enough to have taken place a hundred years ago.

I can quite understand the political situation, having read all you and Curzon and Jennings wrote. For me it is not unsatisfactory; but for the general Tory prospects it is most gloomy. What a fool Lord S. was to let me go so easily!

Give Winston the enclosed Mexican stamp.

To his Mother.

Naples: March 14, 1887.

I was very glad to get your letter of the 7th the day before yesterday. We are very comfortable and happy here. The weather is lovely and the hotel most comfortable.

We have heard nothing yet of our servants and luggage, and conclude they are still at Messina, unable to get away. How fortunate it was for us that we made the bolt we did! I have not seen anyone here I know, except one of the FitzGeorges. We have been to the opera and the circus; both very good. We amuse ourselves by contemplating excursions to Pompeii and even Vesuvius; but we are both such lazy sightseers that I doubt whether we shall ever go there. Sitting in the gardens listening to the band, or driving along the coast, is more our line.

I have just received a long and most interesting letter from George. I cannot think for what political reasons anyone should wish me to return; I could do no good. I make out from the papers that since I left the Government the Estimates—Army and Navy, supplementary and annual—have been reduced by over 700,000*l.* If this is so, some friend in the House should proclaim it. If George looks at two letters from Jackson[1] just after I went out, among my papers, and at my speech on resignation, and compares them with the Estimates actually produced, he will find out if I am right in my supposition. He might ask Jackson, privately, as a friend, the truth of the matter. You see, the Government have adopted my suggestions as to the printed statements of Estimates and as to Parliamentary Committee; so altogether my action is not unjustified by events.

Smith seems to make a poor Leader as far as debate goes. He seems to leave the management of procedure to Raikes and Ritchie and to be unable to take any part himself. I think they were very foolish to accept that amendment of Hartington's; it makes them look more than ever like a patronised and protected Government. Coercion will be very difficult for them in view of the reported evidence of the Cowper Commission. Many Tory M.P.s are pledged against Coercion, and fear to lose their seats. Beach is a great loss to them in respect of this question. However, all these things do not interest me much. *Che sarà sarà.*

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[1] Secretary to the Treasury.

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I shall probably stop a few days in Paris, so as to let the House rise for the Easter holidays, before I get back. I suppose I must make a speech in Paddington in the holidays. George might ascertain from Fardell what would be a good day.

How men may for a time prosper continually, whatever they do, and then for a time fail continually, whatever they do, is a theme in support of which history and romance supply innumerable examples. This chapter marks such a change in the character of the story I have to tell. Hitherto the life of Lord Randolph Churchill has been attended by almost unvarying success. His most powerful enemies had become his friends. His instinct when to strike and when to stay was unerring. Fortune seemed to shape circumstances to his moods. The forces which should have controlled him became obedient in his service. The frowns of age and authority melted at his advance, and rebuke and envy pursued him idly. All this was now to be changed. During the rest of his public life he encountered nothing but disappointment and failure. First, while his health lasted, the political situation was so unfavourable that, although his talents shone all the brighter, he could effect nothing. Then, when circumstances offered again a promising aspect, the physical apparatus broke down. When he had the strength, he had not the opportunity. When opportunity returned, strength had fled. So that at first, by sensible gradations, his political influence steadily diminished; and afterwards, by a more rapid progress, he declined to disease and death.

When a politician dwells upon the fact that he is thankful to be rid of public cares, and finds serene contentment in private life, it may usually be concluded that he is extremely unhappy. Although Lord Randolph's letters to his mother, to give her pleasure, were written in a cheery and optimistic vein, there is no doubt that he felt very bitterly the sudden reversal of his fortunes and the arrest of his career. During this voyage, of which he gives so gay an account, he was afflicted by fits of profound depression and would often sit by himself for hours plunged in gloomy thought. And I think he had good reason to be dejected; for although he had parted from his colleagues under all guise of courtesy and good-will he knew well that enormous barriers were building themselves against him, and that no talents, no services, no needs—short of the bluntest compulsion—would induce them to share their power with him.

Lord Randolph Churchill procured by his resignation almost every point of detail for which he had struggled in vain in the Cabinet. The reductions of 700,000*l.* in the Navy Estimates, which had been conceded to his insistence, were ratified and maintained by his successor. The Estimates for the Army, which had been declared utterly irreducible, were reduced by 170,000*l.* after his resignation. The Supplementary Estimate of 500,000*l.* for the defences of the Egyptian frontier, to which he had long demurred, was promptly rejected by Mr. Goschen as an unauthorised charge on British funds. He might therefore claim with perfect truth that he had saved

1887 Æt. 38 the taxpayers 1,400,000*l.*; and although our sense of financial proportion has been largely modified by time, this was considered in those days a not insignificant sum. It is not necessary here to examine the policy of these economies. It is sufficient that they were strongly resisted, in spite of his advocacy, while he was a member of the Government, and admitted on their merits after he had resigned.

The coaling stations—of such vital urgency in December 1886—were left untouched by additional expenditure until 1888, and strengthened then only to an inconsiderable extent. Seven coaling stations which figured in the estimates presented to Lord Randolph Churchill—namely, Halifax, Jamaica, St. Lucia, Esquimault, Ascension, Trincomalee and Sierra Leone, have been in the light of modern experience reduced (1905) by Conservative Ministers, the heirs of the Government of 1886, to 'skeletons,' on which no money is to be spent in peace time.

The objections which Lord Randolph had entertained to the Eastern policy which Lord Iddesleigh seemed inclined to pursue, were justified by Lord Salisbury's action at the Foreign Office. All idea of interference in the internal affairs of the Balkan States vanished so completely from the minds of Conservative statesmen that it was held libellous to assert that it had ever existed; and the instructions that were sent by the new Foreign Minister to Sir William White, were of such a nature that Lord Randolph could say of them, 'the English people may now be certain that they are not likely to be involved in any European struggle arising out of Bulgarian complications.' The new Procedure rules, which he had been accused of forcing upon unwilling colleagues, were presented to Parliament unaltered; the Local Government Bill took the extensive form he had desired; the introduction of a Whig element into the Cabinet was secured; and the Dartford programme, for which he had been condemned as a Radical in disguise, became the prosperous and successful policy of the Conservative party. The spirit of the Administration and the aims which it pursued—at home, in Ireland, and abroad—in policy and in administration, were indeed widely different from those of any Government he would have guided; but in so far as the special points in conflict were concerned, Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation was vindicated in the most definite and tangible manner by the actions of those who had most strenuously opposed him.

All this availed him nothing. Ministers in plenty had quitted English Governments before without dissociating themselves from the party to which they belonged; but whether their course was inspired by honest principle or dictated by unworthy motives, whether it was marked by support of their successors or by intrigues and assaults to procure their overthrow, scarcely one was more relentlessly assailed than Lord Randolph Churchill. Even more pertinent and remarkable than the resignation of Lord Palmerston in 1853 is the case of Lord Salisbury himself. The Derby-Disraeli Ministry was in 1867

1887 Æt. 38 in a minority in the House of Commons and their position was highly insecure. The question of Reform pressed upon them, urgent and inevitable. A failure to deal with it effectively, still more an attempt to shirk it, might have inflicted enduring injury upon the Conservative party. Lord Salisbury met the Bill with uncompromising opposition. When Mr. Disraeli stood firm, he immediately resigned—and not alone; for by his personal influence he carried with him both Lord Carnarvon and General Peel. In this crisis nothing but the determination of Disraeli sustained the Government. Yet Lord Salisbury by writings, by vigorous and even violent attacks, by co-operation in Parliament with Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright, did not hesitate to compass its defeat. And he was wrong! But how was he treated? His good faith was never challenged; his disinterested abandonment of great office was admired; his error was condoned. When Disraeli returned to power in 1874, he allowed no prejudice or consideration of former hostility to separate him from the man who had dubbed him a 'political adventurer,' and it was upon that association—stamped into the imagination of the people by the Congress of Berlin, that Lord Salisbury's chief claim to leadership afterwards rested.

Why, then, was Lord Randolph Churchill so hardly used by the party which owed so much to his efforts up till the year 1887, and might have often been grateful for support, and more often still for silences afterwards? Why was such unusual and uncompromising advantage taken of the false step he had made? No doubt much must be set down to the animosities he had excited; much to the alarm of a Cabinet at so impulsive and imperious a colleague; something to Lord Salisbury's desire that the leadership of the House of Commons and all that might follow therefrom, should be secured to Mr. Balfour. Perhaps, too, they felt less compunction in dealing with him than with an older man, and thought with Smith that all this was 'only an incident in the life of a young politician'; that ten years later, or twenty years even, he might serve with his own contemporaries or lead a younger generation. Time would cool the blood of the Reformer, and the experience of adversity might temper an impatience born of extraordinary success. Little did they know how short was the span, or at what a cost in life and strength the immense exertions of the struggle had been made. That frail body, driven forward by its nervous energies, had all these last five years been at the utmost strain. Good fortune had sustained it; but disaster, obloquy and inaction now suddenly descended with crushing force, and the hurt was mortal. 1887 Æt. 38

CHAPTER XVIII

ECONOMY

When I consider life, 'tis all a cheat;
Yet, fool'd with hope, men favour the deceit;
Trust on and think to-morrow will repay.
To-morrow's falser than the former day;
Lies worse; and while it says we shall be blessed
With some new joys, cuts off what we possest.
Strange cozenage! none would live past years again;
Yet all hope pleasure in what yet remain;
And from the dregs of life think to receive
What the first sprightly running could not give.

DRYDEN, *Aurung-Zebe.*

1887 ÆT. 38 THE position of a Minister who has withdrawn from a Cabinet is always difficult and peculiar. If for the sake of some principle which he considers vital he is prepared openly to attempt to wreck the Government and inflict upon the party a defeat at the polls, and if the issue is one which must soon be decided, the course, however painful, is plain. He has only to drive steadfastly on through the storm, like Lord Salisbury in 1867 or Lord Hartington in 1886, careless of consequences so long as he does his duty, disdainful of the anger of friends, if he holds them mistaken, and looking for vindication to the calm, just judgments of the after-time. But if the question on which he has separated from his colleagues is not paramount or urgent, and if, while differing strongly from the Government, he is yet determined not to injure the party from which that Government is drawn, his position becomes impossible. The more powerful he has been, the more powerless he becomes; the higher his office, the greater his fall.

From his place in Parliament he is bound, in common-sense and consistency, to uphold and justify his immediate contention. It may be economy; it may be Free Trade. Whenever that subject is raised he must be in his place, alike for his own defence and for the sake of his cause, to show that there was good reason for his action and that the public interest was at stake. If he feels strongly, he will speak strongly. Convictions harden and grow, and differences magnify and ossify as the controversy progresses. His party and his former colleagues are embarrassed by his proceedings, however legitimate or honest they may admit them to be. The more effective his advocacy, and weighty his charges, the more they are resented. The Opposition are naturally pleased. They take from the ex-Minister's statements whatever they may consider useful to themselves and they employ his phrases and arguments to belabour in the House and in the country the party and the Government they are seeking to overthrow. Thus assailed, the Ministerial press and the party machine—with all its scribes, agents, orators and small fry—retaliate after their kind. In a hundred newspapers, from a hundred platforms, hitherto

1887 Æt. 38 voluble in his praise, the ex-Minister becomes the object of depreciation and censure, expressed in varying degrees of vulgar and untruthful imputation. And all the while, since he will not declare general war upon his party, he is prevented from defeating calumny by vigorous action or answering malice by attack.

When Lord Randolph Churchill pressed his charges of extravagance and inefficiency against the public departments, the party which happened to be responsible at the time, were themselves offended. When the ex-Chancellor of the Exchequer urged the need of economy and spoke his mind, in all courteous moderation, upon the financial policy of his successor, the Government Whips whispered that it was only his jealousy and spite. If, on the other hand, he had remained silent, the judgment of the nation on the great question for which he had sacrificed so much would have gone by default. To do nothing was to abandon his cause; to move was to quarrel with his party.

These embarrassments are only aggravated when the resigning Minister has been exercising in the Cabinet a general authority over the whole field of policy. As Leader of the House of Commons Lord Randolph had become acquainted with almost every question which was likely at that time to come before Parliament. On many of these he had formed strong views of his own. He knew exactly how he had intended to handle them when they became subjects of debate. When therefore he heard them mishandled, or a course adopted at variance with Cabinet decisions he had previously obtained, it was natural that he should wish to criticise or demur. Such conditions pointed inevitably, if the tension were prolonged, to a total rupture between the most patient ex-Minister and the most generous Government; and Lord Randolph was not the most patient of men, nor the Government the most generous of Governments.

Looking back on the circumstances and events of those years in the light of after-knowledge, there may be some who will find it easy to say what Lord Randolph should have done after his resignation. He should have stated the whole grounds of his difference with the Tory Cabinet, minimising nothing, keeping nothing back. In two or three speeches in Parliament and in the country he should broadly have outlined his general political conception of the course the Conservative party should follow, and then, unless he was prepared to wage relentless war upon the Government for the purpose of compelling them to adopt that course, he should forthwith have withdrawn himself entirely from public life. Leaving his party in the place of power to which he had raised them, with all the glamour of three years of cumulative and unexampled success still untarnished, he might well have been content to stand for a season apart from the floundering progress of the Administration, leaving to others to muddle away the majority he had made. And he could have counted, not without reason, upon the continued affection of the Conservative working classes. The party press

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would have been silent or even conciliatory. The relentless irritation of the machine would have been prevented. As the years passed by and the discredit of the Government increased, the Tory Democracy would have turned again to the lost leader by whom the victories of the past had been won.

Lord Randolph Churchill chose otherwise. He did not lay deep or long plans. His nature prompted him to speak as he felt, and to deal with the incident of the hour as it occurred. He was solemnly in earnest about economy and departmental mismanagement. He wanted to curb expenditure; and, while at that business, he was not at all concerned with his 'prestige' or his 'career.' Deeply injurious to himself and to his influence with the Conservative party as his course ultimately proved, it was at any rate perfectly simple and straightforward. He returned to England at the end of March, and plunged at once into the vortex of politics. In three speeches which he delivered during the month of April to public audiences at Paddington (where he defended particularly his resignation), at Birmingham, and at Nottingham, he made clear what his attitude towards Lord Salisbury's Government would be. He was entirely independent of that Government. He had resigned from it on important grounds of difference. He desired a liberal and progressive policy in domestic affairs, and he was determined to wage war on extravagance and expenditure. But in the main lines of their policy he was a supporter of the Government; and to the cause of the Union, as to the large and permanent interests of the Conservative party, he remained perfectly loyal. From these intentions he never in any degree varied or departed in the years that followed. ‘You are quite right,’ he wrote to FitzGibbon (November 5, 1887), ‘in supposing that mere returning to office has never been in my mind. I fight for a policy and not for place; and when I go back to office (if ever) I shall have secured my policy.’ A Tory Democratic policy could only be furthered from within the Conservative party, and to that party he faithfully adhered. Besides Mr. Jennings, Lord Randolph had two good friends among the younger men in the House of Commons —his brother-in-law, Lord Curzon, and Mr. Ernest Beckett, the member for Whitby. These gentlemen stood by him, worked with him, and rendered him many political services in the years that followed his resignation, for which they were not extravagantly beloved in the high places of their party.

With these three exceptions the late Leader of the House of Commons was entirely alone. To do him justice he made no effort to increase his following and discouraged several who would have willingly worked with him. Profoundly as he disagreed with much that the Government did, and disliked the temper that inspired it, fiercely as he resented the Lobby slanders and the steady detraction of the party press, never in the five years that followed—the last five years, as they were fated to be, of his physical strength—did he contemplate alliance of any sort with the Liberal party or seek

1887 Æt. 38 to cause cave, clique or faction in the Conservative ranks.

The introduction of the Budget on April 21 afforded Lord Randolph his first opportunity of opening his 'economy' campaign. Mr. Goschen's ingenious Budget differed widely from the ambitious proposals of his predecessor. The reductions in the Estimates for which Lord Randolph had fought were, indeed, maintained—and even increased. The result was a surplus of 776,000*l*. This Mr. Goschen now increased by an addition to the stamp duties, yielding 100,000*l*., and by a reduction of the Sinking Fund and Debt Charge from 28 millions to 26 millions. The total sum, amounting in the balance to a surplus of 2,779,000*l*., was to be expended in taking a penny off the income-tax, at a cost of 1,560,000*l*.; in reducing the duties on tobacco by 600,000*l*.; and by granting 330,000*l*. in aid of the local rates, leaving a final estimated surplus of 289,000*l*.

The Budget was, on the whole, applauded. The Conservative party, whose consciences were a little uneasy on financial questions, were delighted. The very questionable resort to the Sinking Fund—not for any special emergency nor general scheme of fiscal revision, but simply for the purpose of courting popularity by inconsiderable reductions of taxation—was sustained by Mr. Goschen's financial record. 'Great,' exclaimed Lord Randolph Churchill, 'is the worldly worth of a reputation!' In complete good-humour, albeit with a sharp edge, he rallied the Chancellor of the Exchequer—'the canonised saint of the financial purists'—on his lapse from the austere principles he had formerly professed; and both on the night of the Budget's introduction and four days later when he spoke next after Mr. Gladstone, he addressed to the Government and to the Conservative party earnest counsels of retrenchment and departmental reform. He added:—

> It is not necessary to touch the Sinking Fund. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has ample resources at his disposal. If he leaves the Sinking Fund alone, and remits a penny of the income-tax, he will still have a balance of 400,000*l.* If he does not reduce the income-tax, and prefers to take off the tobacco duty, he will have a balance of 800,000*l.* If he touches neither of these, and relieves the rates, he will have a balance of 300,000*l.* He can do any of these things if he will only leave the Sinking Fund alone; and he is touching it for a purpose so paltry and frivolous that I fail to understand why it entered his mind. I pray the Chancellor of the Exchequer to believe that I only make these remarks because of my intense and earnest desire that the present Government—whose career, I hope, is going to be a long one—may enter upon the paths of financial stability.

On this Mr. Gladstone enters in his diary: 'R. Churchill excellent.'

The Parliamentary Committee on Army and Navy Estimates, for which Lord Randolph had asked at the beginning of the year, had been promised by the Government in reply to a question, put during his absence, by Lord Curzon. But weeks and even months were allowed to slip by without the necessary motion being made. When at length it was put on

1887 Æt. 38 the paper it was immediately blocked; and thus it would have probably remained. But one day, when the first business happened to be the vote for the decoration of Westminster Abbey, Lord Randolph asked abruptly if the Government really meant to say that they considered the decoration of Westminster Abbey more important than a Parliamentary inquiry into the naval and military expenditure. After this the motion was put down at a reasonable hour, and it passed by general consent. On May 14 Mr. Smith wrote:—

10 Downing Street, Whitehall: May 14, 1887.

My dear R. C.,—Before we proceed to nominate the Committee on Army and Navy Estimates I should be glad to know if you would take a leading place upon it.

I cannot, of course, nominate the Chairman; but, so far as I am concerned, I should be very glad indeed if you would take the Chair, and I should say so to my friends, as I have complete confidence that your influence would be exercised with absolute impartiality and for the good of the public service.

Believe me
Yours very sincerely,
W. H. Smith.

Lord Randolph replied at once in the affirmative; but the delay in nominating the members continued, and his patience broke again:—

2 Connaught Place, W.: May 24, 1887.

My dear Smith,—I must ask you to excuse me from having the honour of dining with you to-night. The dinner is, of course, an official one, and the names of the guests will be in the papers, and it will be assumed by the public that those who dine with the Leader of the House are thoroughly satisfied with the policy and conduct of the Government.

As far as I am concerned such an assumption would be entirely unfounded. I have watched a great deal in the action of the Government which I deplore more than I can say; but I cannot pass over without notice your neglect to nominate the Army and Navy Estimates Committee last night, or rather this morning, and your postponing of that most important matter till after Whitsuntide. The delay in appointing that Committee is scandalous and inexcusable It might long ago have commenced its work had the Government been in earnest about the matter; but last night you gave me a positive promise that you would nominate it without further delay, and, relying on that, I spent the evening till 12.30 in examination of the Estimates with two other gentlemen, and, being then very tired, did not return to the House. I dare say you are all right in thinking that you can afford to indulge in this kind of treatment of one of your supporters, but you cannot expect me to show publicly pleasure or satisfaction. *Hodie tibi, cras mihi.*

Yours very truly,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

Smith replied softly:—

3 Grosvenor Place, London, S.W.: May 24, 1887.

My dear R. C.,—I am very sorry you do not dine with me this evening, and still more for the cause.

At half-past five this morning I moved that the Committee be nominated, but I was met by cries from the other side of the House that it was opposed, and by murmurs from our own benches, and I felt it was impossible to proceed further at that hour with a jaded and heated house.

I am sure you would have done as I did if you had been in my place.

Yours very sincerely,
W. H. SMITH.

1887 Æt. 38 But the Committee was appointed without further delay.

Meanwhile Lord Randolph had been industriously preparing his general indictment of War Office and Admiralty maladministration. To the intricate and detailed information which he had acquired at the Treasury, he added a mass of material accumulated with the greatest care and trouble by Mr. Jennings and amplified and checked by various expert authorities, with whom he was in communication. Basing himself on this and on the papers presented to Parliament he formulated his charges at Wolverhampton on June 3. He seems to have believed sincerely that it would be possible for him to effect a large reduction in the cost of government. He recalled to his mind the fact that the Government of 1860 was determined on a retrenchment policy, and the Army and Navy Estimates were in five years reduced from 27½ millions to 22½ millions; and that whereas in 1868 the estimates were 25 millions, by 1871 they had been reduced to 21 millions. Such examples may prove the possibility of retrenchment, but they were the achievements of a giant Minister working year by year from inside the Cabinet, and using the whole leverage of the great department over which he presided; and we have since learned from Mr. Morley's pages that even in Liberal Cabinets elected on the famous watchwords of ‘Peace, Retrenchment and Reform’ Mr. Gladstone had to fight for his economies at the constant peril of his official life.

It is instructive to study the course of an agitation for naval and military economy directed by anyone outside the circle of the Government of the day and without the aid of the machinery of State. It may begin in all undivided earnestness in a simple demand for a reduction of expenditure. The Government and its official advisers will reply that they, too, are the zealous advocates of such a policy, if only they can be shown how to effect it; and they invite suggestions of a specific character. That is the first stage. Thus challenged, the economist leaves for the moment the enunciation of great principles of finance and national policy and descends to grapple with masses of technical details. He discovers a quantity of muddles and jobs, and arrays imposing instances of waste and inefficiency. His statements are, of course, contradicted, and his charges are wrangled over *seriatim.* Expert is set against expert, and assertion against assertion. The reformer is accused—not, generally, without some justice—of exaggeration; and he is in part and in detail inevitably betrayed into inaccuracy. But in the issue enough is proved to awaken public anxiety and even indignation. Certain main facts of discreditable and disquieting character are clearly established. Many weaknesses, neglects, incompetencies are revealed. There are guns without ammunition. There are fortresses without provisions. There are regiments without reserves. There are ships imperfectly constructed. There are weapons which are obsolete or bad. But in the process of the controversy the movement has been insensibly and irresistibly deflected from its original object. It began in a cry for economy; it has become a cry for efficiency. That is the second stage. The Government and their official advisers at the proper moment now shift their ground with an adroitness born of past experience. They admit the damaging facts which can no longer be denied. The politicians explain that they arise from the neglect or incapacity of their predecessors. They recognise the public demand for more perfect instruments of war. They declare that they will not flinch from their plain duty (whatever others may have done); they will repair the deficiencies which clearly exist; they will correct the abuses which have been exposed; and in due course they will send in the bill to the Chancellor of the Exchequer. So that the third stage of an unofficial agitation in favour of a reduction of expenditure and a more modest establishment becomes an agitation in favour of an increase of expenditure and a more lavish establishment.

All this happened exactly in the case of Lord Randolph Churchill. In his earlier speeches since his resignation he had confined himself to the need of retrenchment, and this had been the ground on which he had fought in the Cabinet. But at Wolverhampton he sought to show that, in spite of the great and increasing expenditure, the services were in a wholly unsatisfactory and even dangerous condition. And in this he was beyond all question brilliantly successful. In a fierce speech of an hour and forty minutes he unfolded a comprehensive catalogue of follies. His audience, consisting of about 4,000 persons—mainly Conservative working men—at first doubtful and apathetic, were gradually raised, as the newspaper reports testify, to a state of indignation. With a display of feeling unusual even at a partisan meeting, and still more remarkable when the currents of ordinary partisanship were running against the speaker, they interrupted him repeatedly with cries of anger, and he ended amid a perfect tumult of assent.

It is not necessary to this account to examine the details of his charges. Each generation has its own jobs and scandals to confront. The administrative follies of 1887 have passed away. Some survived, to be dwarfed by more astonishing successors; others were corrected, but not extirpated. All have produced a prosperous progeny, nourished in richer pastures, and attaining proportions of which their ancestors could hardly have dreamed. The main outlines of the indictment must, however, be placed on record. The condition of the British Army and Navy in the year 1887 was, in sober truth, a serious public danger. Mr. Gladstone's Government of 1880 had had, during their tenure of office, to deal with all kinds of military and Colonial enterprises for the effective execution of which a Liberal Administration is not naturally fitted. They detested their work heartily; they executed it very badly. In truth the Cabinet, distracted by the violence of Egyptian and Irish affairs and the

1887 Æt. 38 gravity of the Eastern situation, torn by the increasing demands of Radicalism, and harassed by a relentless Opposition, was incapable of giving to naval and military matters adequate consideration. There had followed upon all this the two years of political revolution with which this story has been largely concerned. It was natural, it was inevitable, that in the interval which had elapsed since the great Army Reform Parliament of 1868 much waste and inefficiency should have crept into the military system; and in the same period, from considerations altogether outside the course of British politics, an enormous extension and complexity had affected the responsibilities and functions of the Navy.

Lord Randolph alleged in respect of the Army that not a single fortress was properly armed; that no reserve of heavy guns existed; that the artillery, both horse and field, was obsolete; that the rifle of the infantry was defective; that the swords and bayonets broke and bent under the required tests; and that, notwithstanding these deficiencies, the cost of the land service had increased in twelve years by over four millions a year. He charged the Admiralty with such waste as exporting Australian tinned meat to Australia, rum and sugar to Jamaica, flour to Hong Kong, and rice to India; with making improvident contracts for ships, engines, and materials of various kinds; with disarming the Spithead and Portsmouth forts in order to arm warships. He asserted that the whole of the 43-ton guns designed by the Ordnance Department, on which 200,000*l.*

had been spent, were worthless and liable to burst even with reduced charges; that the Ordnance officials had been told beforehand by the principal experts of Messrs. Armstrong that this type of gun was imperfect; that they persisted in making them; that one of the guns had already burst; that the others had been condemned; but that they were nevertheless to be employed on his Majesty's ships. The most serious count, however, dealt with various classes of ships which had in important particulars failed to realise the expectations of the designers and were in consequence unfit for active service.

He instanced especially the *Ajax* and the *Agamemnon*, the battleships of the *Admiral* class and the *Australia* class of cruisers. Of the armoured cruiser *Impérieuse* he declared that she drew four feet more water than was expected, with the result that the armour which should have been above water was now below water, and in consequence the ship was actually unprotected. 'The result of all this is that in the last twelve or thirteen years eighteen ships have been either completed or designed by the Admiralty to fulfil certain purposes, and on the strength of the Admiralty statements Parliament has faithfully voted . . . about ten millions, and it is now discovered and officially acknowledged that in respect of the purposes for which these ships were designed, the whole of the money has been absolutely misapplied, utterly wasted and thrown away.' The foundation for this somewhat sweeping statement was supplied by the

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explanatory memorandum to the Navy Estimates, 1887. 'In one important particular,' so this document affirmed, 'there is a discrepancy between . . . the original design and its result which, in the case of the *Impérieuse* and her sister ship the *Warspite*, attracted some attention, and which is likely to recur in the case of the belted cruisers, seven in number, the *Warspite* and the armoured vessels of the *Admiral* class. . . . If the whole of the 900 tons [of coal] . . . be placed on board [the *Impérieuse*] the top of the belt will, on the ship's first going to sea, be six inches below the water.'

The Wolverhampton speech made a considerable stir. In spite of the pressure of Irish affairs and the general instability of the political situation, it was for some days the principal topic of public discussion. The powerful interests assailed, retorted at once, and the newspapers were filled with censure and contradiction. Even those which, like the *Times*, were forced to acknowledge Lord Randolph Churchill 'right in his main contention,' rebuked him ponderously for extravagance of statement and violence of language. His strictures on naval construction brought Sir Nathaniel Barnaby, the late chief constructor to the Admiralty—to whom Lord Randolph had personally alluded—into voluminous protest in the columns of the *Times*, and an acrimonious correspondence ensued. Sir Nathaniel denied that he had been 'dismissed' from his post and pointed in disproof to his having been made a Knight Commander of the Bath. Lord Randolph replied acidly 'that K.C.B.'s and official testimonials were the usual manner in which the country requited long service when the intentions had been honest, no matter how deplorably defective might have been the capacity'; and expressed himself willing to substitute the phrase 'allowed to retire' for the word 'dismissed.' On the main question Sir Nathaniel appealed to Lord George Hamilton; and Lord Randolph brought up Sir Edward Reed, a rival constructor of great repute, who confirmed and even aggravated most of his statements. Both parties fell back upon official records, memoranda and Blue Books; and a battle royal developed, around the outskirts of which naval authorities of every rank and description cruised, seeking to intervene, on the one side or the other, with masses of highly technical information couched in highly controversial terms.

Lord Randolph's contention that the *Ajax* and the *Agamemnon* were failures was not seriously disputed, Sir Nathaniel Barnaby himself admitting (*Times*, June 7) that he was 'thankful they were the only approximately circular and shallow sea-going ships we built.' The fiercest strife raged around the cruiser *Impérieuse*. Sir Nathaniel Barnaby met the assertion that the money spent upon her was 'absolutely misapplied, utterly wasted and thrown away,' by quoting a later Admiralty memorandum which declared her to be, 'if not actually the most powerful, one of the most powerful ironclad cruisers afloat of her tonnage.' But Sir Edward Reed was able to show that this was not extravagant eulogy, for that there was only one other 'ironclad cruiser *of*

1887 ÆT. 38 *her tonnage*' in existence. He also showed that, to lighten her, she had already been deprived of her masts and consequently of her intended sailing powers; and that even so, to bring her to her intended draught, it was necessary to take out the whole of her coal. When the smoke had at length a little lifted, it was generally held that, although Lord Randolph Churchill's charges were sustained on almost every substantial point, he had injured his case by over-stating it. Full marks were also awarded to the 'distinguished ex-public servant cruelly assailed in his professional character.'

Lord Randolph Churchill was duly elected Chairman of the Army and Navy Committee. Mr. Jennings, who was also a member, laboured indefatigably to collect, sift and arrange material. The Committee met without delay, and collected much valuable and startling evidence. They discovered, for instance, that one branch of the War Office cost 5,000*l.* a year in supervising an expenditure of 250*l.* a year. 'Would it have been possible,' the Accountant-General was asked, 'for any private member to have ascertained from the Estimates laid before Parliament from 1870 to the present year that the total increase of net ordinary Army expenditure amounted to almost nine millions of money?'—A. 'It would have been extremely difficult.' Q. '. . . . or that since 1875 there had been an increase of about five millions?'—A. 'I do not think it would.' 'Up to now,' Lord Randolph suggested, 'Parliament has never had the smallest idea of what was the total cost of the services?'—'Taking the whole of the services,' replied Mr. Knox, 'it has not.' It would be easy to multiply these specimens of the evidence collected by the Select Committee. Day by day, as it was published, it was commented on by the press, and public and Parliamentary scrutiny was increasingly directed towards the Estimates of the two services. 1887 ÆT. 38

Here is a note which it is pleasant to transcribe:—

> One odd effect of your Committee: [wrote Jennings July 27]. Bradlaugh came to me this afternoon—said he had been reading the evidence—was immensely struck with it—thought you had done enormous service already. I told him a little more about it. He said: 'He has done so much good that I really think I must close up my account against him.' 'Well, surely,' I said, 'there is no use in keeping it open any longer. It only looks like vindictiveness.' 'Yes,' he said, 'I think I will close the ledger.'

It will be convenient to follow Lord Randolph's economy campaign to its conclusion. As it gradually became directed to efficiency rather than simple economy it enlisted an increasing measure of professional support. By May 1888, public opinion had become so vigilant that, following upon some outspoken and not very temperate statements by Lord Wolseley, then Adjutant-General, the Government determined—momentous resolve!—to appoint a Royal Commission with Lord Hartington

1887 — Æt. 38 at its head. Mr. Smith invited Lord Randolph Churchill to join it:—

10 Downing Street, Whitehall: May 18, 1888.

My dear R. C.,—You will render great service to the administrative reform of the two great departments if you will join the Royal Commission over which Lord Hartington will preside.

Mr. Gladstone has asked Mr. Campbell-Bannerman to represent the Opposition; I am to go on, on behalf of the Government; and you would represent those who believe that efficiency and economy may result from a change of system. General Brackenbury will join as a soldier, and Sir F. Richards, who has just returned from sea, as the sailor. Two civilians with extensive knowledge of large business transactions are to be added, and Sir Richard Temple will also be asked as a capable and successful Indian Administrator. These are the people with whom you would be associated in the effort to improve our system, and I hope most sincerely that you will not refuse your help.

Believe me
Yours very truly,
W. H. Smith.

I enclose a copy of the reference.

'To inquire into the civil and professional administration of the Naval and Military Departments and the relation of those Departments to each other and to the Treasury; and to report what changes in their existing system would tend to the efficiency and the economy of the Public Service.'

Lord Randolph, however, knowing a good deal of the ways of such bodies, declined. He was persuaded by Lord Hartington, who wrote:—

Hôtel du Rhin, 4 Place Vendôme: May 26, 1888.

My dear Churchill,—Smith has sent me your letter declining to serve on the Army and Navy Commission. I hope very much that if you have not absolutely made up your mind you may be induced to reconsider your decision, as we are both very anxious to have your assistance.

I think that your Committeehas taken some very valuable evidence which shows the inefficiency and defects of the present system. But I should doubt whether you will effect much more by the examination of minor officials or by investigating the details of the separate votes; and I should think it might be possible for you to leave the inquiry to be finished by some one else. My own opinion is that we shall never get either efficiency or economy until we can find some way of giving the professional men more power and at the same time more responsibility; but how this can be done in combination with our Parliamentary system is a very difficult problem which requires bold and original treatment.

If we cannot suggest a more efficient and intelligent system of superior administration, I think that we shall do very little good by exposing details of maladministration in minor matters; and as the subject-matter of our inquiry is to be the real centre of the whole question of administrative reform, I cannot help thinking that you would find our inquiry more interesting and important than any which you can take up or continue on other branches of the same question.

I remain
Yours sincerely,
HARTINGTON.

The Commission appointed on June 17, 1888, did not report till March 1890. Lord Randolph's separate memorandum, which will be found in the Appendix, is well known. Its sweeping proposals were not adopted by the majority of the Commissioners; but it has been so often quoted, and bears so closely upon modern controversies, that the reader who is interested in these subjects should not neglect to study it. The indirect results of his agitation were, perhaps, more fruitful. Lord George Hamilton, with whom he so often engaged in sharp argument when Navy Estimates recurred, bears a generous tribute to the unseen influence which severe public criticism exerts upon the workings of a great department. It would seem that Lord Randolph Churchill's belief that considerable economies were possible on the establishments of 1886 was not without foundation.

Lord George Hamilton writes, October 4, 1904 :—

During my tenure of office at the Admiralty great changes were made, and in the foremost rank of these reforms was the reorganisation and renovation of the Royal dockyards. These establishments had been allowed to grow and develop without a sufficient regard to the revolution in shipbuilding which the substitution of iron and steel for wood had caused. Laxity in supervision, connivance at practices neither economical nor efficient, dawdling over work, obsolete machinery and ill-adjusted establishments, associated with Estimates framed for political exigence rather than naval needs, all combined to bring these great national building yards into disrepute. The *personnel* was first-rate both in ability and integrity and the material used as good as money could obtain. All that was required was a thorough readjustment of the establishments to the work they were called upon to do, by the reduction of the redundant and superfluous workmen, by the dismissal of the incompetent and an increase to the numbers working in steel and iron Changes such as these, if associated with the introduction of the methods and checks in force in the best private yards, were quite sufficient to put our dockyards in the first rank of building establishments. But whoever undertook the task would be subject to much obloquy, both local and Parliamentary. The stern suppression of long-standing malpractices, the dismissal of a large number of unnecessary and indifferent workmen, if enforced on a large scale, required a strong current of public opinion behind it for its consummation. This assistance I obtained from Lord Randolph Churchill's crusade on economy. He and I differed on many questions of naval administration, but we were at one as to the necessity of dockyard reform. Many economists who, though agreeing in the abstract with Lord Randolph's views, hesitated to cut down the effective fighting forces of the Army and Navy, were delighted to co-operate with him in so non-contentious an improvement. The Labour party was not then as well organised or represented in Parliament as they have since become, and their opposition to dockyard dismissals was less strenuous than it would be now.

I was thus enabled, after two years of continuous labour and trouble, to organise the dockyards from top to bottom, to put down establishments that were not required, to dismiss the loiterers and to establish, modelled on the practice of the best private yards, a completely new system of supervision, check, and control. The effect was electrical. The dockyards at once became the cheapest and most economical builders of warships in the world. The largest ironclad ever designed, up to 1889, was built, completed and commissioned ready for sea in two years and eight months from the date of the laying down of its keel. No large ironclad had been previously completed within five years. Up to 1886 the average cost of the big ships building in these yards was 40 per cent. above their original estimate; since then the estimates have rarely been exceeded. In the first year of the new system there was an instantaneous saving of 400,000*l.* The continuous and satisfactory progress of our vast and annually increasing building programme is mainly due to those changes, and Lord Randolph could, I think, fairly claim that, though his name was not publicly associated with the great national gain thus achieved, it was the public opinion which he aroused, which largely contributed to the consummation of dockyard reform.

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Lord Randolph Churchill addressed five meetings in the autumn and winter of 1887—two at Whitby and Stockport respectively for his two friends, Mr. Beckett and Mr. Jennings; and three in the North. The Whitby meeting in September afforded an opportunity for a display of the hostility with which he was regarded by the dominant section of the Conservative party, for several prominent local worthies publicly refused to attend—a proceeding which even the *Times* was compelled to censure. The 7,000 persons who gathered upon the sands and around the slopes of a kind of natural amphitheatre under the west cliff gave him a very different welcome, and listened with delighted attention during that beautiful afternoon to a spirited and ingenious defence of the miserable session through which the Government had shuffled. In Yorkshire and Lancashire, as in the earlier meetings of the year, and later in the North, his popularity with the Conservative masses was still undimmed. He was greeted everywhere by immense crowds. The largest halls were much too small. Paddington was loyal and contented. His Birmingham supporters asked no better than to fight for him at once. At Nottingham, long before his arrival, the streets were thronged; and all the way from the station to the Albert Hall he passed through continuous lines of cheering people.[1] Similar scenes took place at Wolverhampton, and the Conservative Association of that borough passed a formal resolution supporting his policy of economy. In the North he made a regular progress. He visited three important centres in a single week and made a 'trilogy' of speeches—no light task for a speaker whose every word is reported and examined. He spoke on the afternoon of October 20 at Sunderland, at great length, in reply to a previous speech of Mr. Gladstone, covering the whole field of domestic policy and defining the immediate limits of the Tory Democratic programme. These proved sufficiently comprehensive to include Free Education, Local Option in the sale of drink, a compulsory Employer's Liability Act, the abolition of the power of entailing land upon unborn lives, 'One man, one vote,' and Parliamentary registration at the cost of local bodies. At Newcastle, two days later, he spoke in defence of the Union, justified the Government policy in Ireland, and vehemently attacked Mr. Gladstone for the countenance which he showed towards lawlessness and disorder.

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[1] *Times*, April 20, 1887.

On the Monday he spoke at Stockton, and here he turned aside to deal with another subject which had been thrust much upon him of late. Mr. Jennings, like Lord Dunraven, was, as the reader is aware, a Fair Trader, and throughout the year—from the very beginning of their association—he had laboured tactfully, but persistently, to win Lord Randolph to his views. He knew that although the cry of 'Less waste and no jobbery' might appeal to many, 'Economy' was not in itself a popular cause to submit to a Democratic electorate, and was, moreover, foreign to the instincts and traditions of Toryism. 'Fair Trade,' on the contrary, touched a very tender spot in a Conservative breast; and, quite apart from this consideration, Mr. Jennings was an enthusiast. He had examined the question both from an American and a British point of view. He possessed a large and well-stored arsenal of fact and argument. On such subjects as 'One-sided Free Trade,' 'Our Ruined Industries,' 'The Dumping of Sweated Goods,' 'The Commercial Union of the Empire' or 'Our Dwindling Exports' he could write, as his frequent letters show, with force and feeling. Scarcely since St. Anthony had there been such a temptation on the one hand or such austerity on the other.

'The main reason,' Lord Randolph had said at Sunderland, 'why I do not join myself with the Protectionists is that I believe that low prices in the necessaries of life and political stability in a democratic Constitution are practically inseparable, and that high prices in the necessaries of life and political instability in a democratic Constitution are also practically inseparable.' And this having drawn upon him the wrath of Mr. Chaplin, he proceeded at Stockport to make his case good. He used no economic arguments. He pointed to the supremacy of the Conservative party as a proof of political stability under low food-prices. He pointed to the conversion of Sir Robert Peel as a proof of political instability under high food-prices. To make wheat-farming profitable a duty was required which would raise the price of corn from 28*s.* a quarter to something between 40*s.* and 45*s.* a quarter. Would anyone propose a sufficient tax on imported corn to make it worth while for the rural voter to pay the higher prices which Fair Trade would secure for the manufactures of the urban voter? How did the Fair Traders propose to deal with India? How did they propose to deal with Ireland? Could they prove that France, Austria and Germany were more prosperous than Great Britain? 'It is no use saying to me, "Go to America or New South Wales." I will not go to America, and I will not go to New South Wales. There is not the smallest analogy between those countries and England. America is a self-contained country and almost everything she requires for her people she can produce in abundance. We cannot. We have more people than we can feed; and not only for food, but for our manufactures, we depend upon raw material imported from abroad. Therefore I decline to go to America or New South Wales; but I would go to European countries—to France, Austria and Germany—and I want to know whether the Fair Traders can prove that the people of those countries are more prosperous than ours.'

This Stockton speech was naturally a great disappointment to Jennings. 'I cannot deny,' he wrote, 'that you gave many of your followers a bitter pill to swallow. I think I could give you satisfactory grounds for admitting that your objections to "Fair Trade" will not stand much investigation; but, of course, the real difficulty is that in many of our constituencies the question is popular. We have been partly elected on the strength of it; and when

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you attack it, you fire a broadside into your own supporters and give the Radicals in our boroughs a stick to beat us with. It is hard for us to fight against your authority, especially when we have been drilling into the minds of the people that yours are the views they should adopt. If you ever had half an hour to spare, I wish you would allow me to put the facts before you. You would soon see, for example, ...' And then follow pages of tersely stated arguments of a kind with which most people are now only too familiar.

They produced no effect upon Lord Randolph. 'The policy which you advocate,' he replied (October 30), 'of duties on foreign imports for revenue purposes much attracted me at one time; but I came to the conclusion that, although such a policy would gain the adhesion of the manufacturing towns, it is open to such fearful attack from the Radicals among the country population that we should lose more than we should gain. I cannot see how you can persuade yourself that the country population would accept a method of raising revenue which would directly benefit the manufacturing population at their expense. The election of '85 made a great impression upon me. Then the defection of the rural vote completely neutralised our great successes in the English boroughs.' And again on November 3, after the discussions at the conference of Conservative Associations: 'Do you see how the Fair Traders have been wrangling and disputing with each other—everyone going in a different direction—confirming all that I said at Stockton about their not knowing their own minds?' Late in November came an invitation from the 'British Union,' a Protectionist Association having its headquarters in Manchester—of all places—to which Lord Randolph replied as follows:—

2 Connaught Place, W.: November 26, 1887.

I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 25th inst. I understand that your Committee are good enough to do me the honour of asking me to preside at a meeting to be held on January 24 in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester, in favour of Fair Trade.

You allude to the recent vote of the Conservative National Union bearing upon this subject, and inquire as to what effect that vote has had upon my mind. I may reply: 'None whatever, except to confirm me in the opinions I expressed at Stockton in the course of last month.' Both at the Fair Trade Conference recently held, as well as at the conference of the delegates of the National Union, I observed that the sentence which would best characterise those discussions was *quot homines tot sententiæ.* There is not among those who desire extensive fiscal reform the slightest approach to real agreement either as to objects or to methods. I must also point out that the delegates of the National Union do not appear to have had any instructions from those whom they were supposed to represent to debate and to decide on the question of Fair Trade, neither did they in any way specially represent trade interests. Their decision in favour of Fair Trade, therefore, is not more weighty than their decision in favour of 'Women's Suffrage,' which latter would certainly not be accepted by the Tory party as a whole.

Under these circumstances you will see that it is not possible for me to depart in any way from the views I have recently expressed on Fair Trade; nor could I, as you kindly

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invite me to do, 'take the helm of a movement' which up to the present remains altogether vague and undefined.

So far as I have been able to discover, this was, with one exception, his last public word on the subject.[1] His objections to Fair Trade were not based on principle. They were entirely practical. He cared little for theory. He hated what he used to call 'chopping logic.' He was not at all concerned to vindicate Mr. Cobden, and he mocked at 'professors' of all kinds. But he thought that as a financial expedient a complicated tariff would not work, and he was sure that as a party manœuvre it would not pay. He saw no way by which the conflicting interests of the counties and the boroughs could be reconciled and he believed that without such reconciliation the movement would prove disastrous to the Conservative cause. He was, no doubt, strengthened in his views by his desire so far as possible to work in harmony with Mr. Chamberlain and so to combine and fuse together all the Democratic forces which supported the Union. Yet Fair Trade had much to offer to a Conservative statesman. To him, above all other Tory leaders, the prospect was alluring. That section of Tory Democracy which had received the gospel of Mr. Farrer Ecroyd—and it was already important—would have followed a Fair Trade champion through thick and thin. In every town he would have secured faithful and active supporters. His earlier speeches had prepared the way. His own immediate allies in Parliament, his best friends in the press, were ardent Fair Traders. Hardly a day passed, as he said at Stockton, without his receiving letters from all classes of people imploring him to come forward as a Fair Trader. He had only to raise the standard to obtain a following of his own strong enough to defy the party machine. The National Union might still afford the necessary organisation. And had he been, as it was the fashion to say, willing to advance his personal position regardless of the interests of the Conservative party, there lay ready to his hand a weapon with which he might have torn the heart out of Lord Salisbury's Government. 1887 ÆT. 38

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[1] See his letter to Mr. Arnold White, p. 459.

CHAPTER XIX

THE NATIONAL PARTY

'Love as if you should hereafter hate; and hate as if you should hereafter love.'—BIAS (quoted by Aristotle).

1887 ÆT. 38 'ALL the politics of the moment,' said Lord Salisbury on March 5, 1887, to the members of the National Conservative Club, 'are summarised in the word "Ireland."' The fierce struggle in the English constituencies was over. The Home Rulers had been totally defeated. Mr. Gladstone had been driven from office. A Conservative Government, strong in its own resources of discipline and class, strengthened by most of the forces of wealth and authority which had hitherto been at the service of the Liberal party, and supported by the energetic multitudes of Tory Democracy, sat in the place of power. Among the ranks of the Opposition, fortified in their midst, with leaders of their own upon their Front Bench, was a solid band of seventy gentlemen of unusual ability actively engaged in preventing the return of their neighbours to office. Such was the grim aspect of the field upon the morrow of the great battle. Such was the change of fortune which a year of Irish policy had brought to the Liberal party. But, although the relative forces of the combatants in the political arena had been so surprisingly altered, the question in dispute remained utterly unsettled and 'Ireland' was still the vital and dominant factor in the political situation.

So long as the Liberal-Unionists adhered to Lord Salisbury's Government it was, of course, unshakable; for it enjoyed the double advantage of their support and of the cleavage which they caused in the Opposition. But the conditions under which Liberal, Unionist support would be continued could not be definitely known; and its withdrawal meant the immediate fall of the Administration. Forced thus to live from day to day upon the goodwill of its allies, with few means of knowing and not always a right to inquire when that goodwill might be impaired, the Government was apparently deficient in real stability or power. Nor could it be said to make up in talent what it lacked in strength. The retirement of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach deprived the Treasury Bench of its sole remaining Conservative Parliamentarian; Mr. Goschen's position was, at any rate for the first year, difficult and peculiar; Mr. Balfour had yet his name to make; and the choice of Mr. Smith for the leadership of the House of Commons, however justified by his courage and his character, so far as the distinction of debate was concerned, only revealed the nakedness of the land.

In all these circumstances it was with no little anxiety that the Conservative party watched the

1887 Æt. 38 progress of the negotiations which attended the Round Table Conference and endeavoured to estimate the effect upon those negotiations and upon the general attitude of the Liberal-Unionist party of the growing tension of Irish affairs. Mr. Chamberlain's intentions were especially uncertain. His effective co-operation with the Conservatives had been largely facilitated by his good relations with Lord Randolph Churchill and the very considerable agreement in political matters which existed between them. But Lord Randolph Churchill had now left the Government; and how could a Radical support a policy from which a progressive Tory had been forced to separate? Moreover, Mr. Chamberlain was closely associated with Sir George Trevelyan. They had resigned together from the Home Rule Cabinet. They fought side by side in the election which followed. They were the joint representatives of Liberal Unionism at the Round Table Conference. On January 22, 1886, while the issue of that conference was still undetermined, Mr. Chamberlain was the chief speaker at a demonstration at Hawick in Sir George Trevelyan's honour; and Sir George Trevelyan was all the time known to be earnestly and eagerly labouring for the reunion of the Liberal party. 'It is because I believe,' said Mr. Chamberlain on this occasion, 'that at all events a great approximation to peace, if not a complete agreement, may be attained without a betrayal of the trust which has been reposed in us that I ask you to await with hope and confidence the result of our further deliberations.' Lord Hartington took, indeed, no part in these negotiations. 'Some one,' he said, characteristically, 'must stay at home to look after the camp'; but he proceeded to wish the Conference 'every measure of success,' and he was careful not to destroy by any words of his the prospects of reconciliation.

The whole situation—already delicate, uncertain and seemingly critical—could not fail to be profoundly influenced by the course of events in Ireland. The winter of 1886 was accompanied by a widespread, though by no means general, refusal or inability to pay rents. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach had never been too enthusiastic in his sympathy with the Irish landowner, and during the winter he had endeavoured to mitigate the severities of the time by the exercise of a kind of 'dispensing power.' Landlords were given to understand that the whole machinery of the Executive would not necessarily be at their disposal for the purpose of enforcing against their tenants claims which, in the opinion of the Chief Secretary, were harsh or unjust. This rough-and-ready method was heartily supported by Sir Redvers Buller, and to its adoption the comparative crimelessness of the winter was largely due. But, however satisfactory its results in practice might be, it was easily and justly assailable in principle; and after the Lord Chief Baron Palles had authoritatively declared that the attempt to withdraw the police from supporting the legal claims of private persons was altogether unjustifiable, the 'dispensing power' had to be abandoned, 1887 Æt. 38 and the law took its regular course. The consequence of the numerous and, in some cases, ruthless evictions which followed was a formidable agrarian conspiracy. The tenants on different estates joined themselves together to offer to the landlord whatever rent they considered just, and where it was refused as insufficient they deposited the whole sum with a managing committee to be used for the purposes of resistance. This movement, known to history as the 'Plan of Campaign,' was the immediate result. The secondary, though not less direct, result was the advent in the House of Commons of a Land Bill and a Coercion Bill, both of which must expose to uncalculated strains the composite forces on which the Government depended.

But now and in the years that were to come the far-seeing statecraft with which the Conservative leaders had stimulated and sustained the schism in the Liberal party and had dealt with the crisis of the General Election was to be vindicated. They had built far stronger than they knew. Underneath the smooth words of the Liberal-Unionist leaders towards their former friends, and behind all the generous emotions of the Round Table Conference, stubborn brute forces were at work which, though they did not necessarily conduce to the stability of the Conservative Government, were inevitably fatal to Liberal reunion. The Liberal-Unionist members who had come back safely to Westminster, having broken with their party organisations and defied the Grand Old Man, were very particular to call themselves Liberals and to deny that they had severed themselves in any degree from the principles and traditions of Liberalism. They banned Tory colours and Tory clubs. When they attended public meetings they took care that the complexion of the platform should be Liberal-Unionist. Even Mr. Goschen, after taking office in a Conservative Government, thought it necessary to assert in his election address his unaltered and unalterable character as a Liberal, and to apologise to the Conservative electors for the strain put upon their natural partisanship by his candidature. And there is no doubt that they were perfectly honest in their belief. They were not conscious of any abandonment of principle. They declared that they agreed with the Liberal party on every other question except the Irish Question, and even in regard to Ireland there was agreement on three points out of four. The Conservatives had exacted no pledges from them. They did not feel themselves divorced from one body of doctrine and engaged to another. They remained in political opinion on all the great contested questions of the day exactly where they had been when Parliament met in January 1885, and they sat in the same places and among the same party.

But, in fact, one change had taken place in their character of more practical importance than all the symbols and nomenclature of party, and counting more in political warfare than any change of principles, however sudden or sweeping: they had changed sides. Abstract principles and party labels might be the same, but whereas in January 1886 they wished and worked for a Liberal victory and a Conservative defeat, in January 1887 they wanted to see the Conservatives win and the Liberals beaten. Otherwise no change! No disagreement, outside Ireland, with the Liberal party—except that they sought its overthrow; no difference except the one difference which swallows up all others—the difference between alliance and war. And this difference, be it noted, was not founded on any passing mood of anger or caprice which smooth words and fair offers might dispel. It was fundamental and innate. It was the basis of the election of these seventy members. They had stood as opponents of Mr. Gladstone, and all the forces he directed. They were elected for the very purpose of preventing his return to power by electors nine-tenths of whom at least were Conservatives. While they opposed Mr. Gladstone, they responded to the constituent bodies by whom they were returned. If they made friends with him—no matter upon what terms—they ceased to represent nine-tenths at least of their electorates.

Moreover, few men go through the experience of an internecine quarrel, with its taunts and charges of treachery and ingratitude exchanged between old comrades who know each other well, and with all the wrenching and tearing asunder of friendships and associations, without contracting a deep and abiding antagonism for those from whom they have broken. Sir George Trevelyan—unembarrassed by a constituency—indeed went back; but he went back alone. The rest remained to justify, by their consistent action, the wisdom of Conservative tactics; to prove, as the years went by, the most trustworthy supporters of the Conservative party, and in the end to secure the main control of its policy. From that strange pilgrimage—'that bitter pilgrimage,' as Mr. Chamberlain calls it (was it so very bitter, after all?), there could be no turning back after the first decisive steps were taken. 1887 ÆT. 38

All this was, however, either unknown or imperfectly appreciated in 1887; and even if the Liberal-Unionists' mind had been thoroughly understood, the uncertainty of the political situation would not have been by any means concluded. For, although there never was any real chance of Liberal reunion, there were repeated possibilities of a Conservative collapse. The Liberal-Unionists were resolved to do nothing that would bring Mr. Gladstone back to power. Apart from imperilling the cause of the Union, that process would probably involve the political extinction of most of their party. But, subject to that dominant proviso, they could not feel any particular affection for Lord Salisbury's Government. They disliked much of its action, they did not agree with its general views, and they could not be impressed by the Parliamentary exposition with which they were favoured. Their leaders were not desirous of office for its own sake; but they were gravely disquieted by the policy adopted towards Ireland, and more than once drawn to the conclusion that a wide reconstruction of the Cabinet would be necessary to maintain the reputation of the Unionist party in Parliament

1887 ÆT. 38 and the country. In view of their evident power to change the Government at any moment by a vote, the passage of the Irish Bills through the House of Commons was attended with extreme danger to the Ministry. On more than one occasion its life depended upon a single hand, and once it was decided that that hand should be withdrawn.

About Ireland and all that concerned her Lord Randolph cared intensely. He felt responsible in no small degree for the denial of Home Rule. As to that he had no doubts; but he had always intended, and had been allowed, with the full sanction of the Cabinet, to declare that the counterpart of the assertion of the Union was a generous, sympathetic, and liberal policy towards the Irish people in regard to religion, self-government, and land. Intimately acquainted as he was with many shades of Irish opinion, he was both grieved and angered at the temper displayed by the conquerors in the years that followed their victory. To Coercion, indeed, so far as it should be necessary to maintain the law, he had made up his mind before he left the Cabinet, and he had no thoughts of going back on that; but the Bill and its enforcement stirred all the latent Liberalism in his character. He discovered, as time went on, that special legislation was not regarded by the Government as a hateful necessity; but as something good in itself, producing a salutary effect upon the Irish people and raising the temper of the Ministerial party. He was offended by the calm assumption of social and racial superiority displayed, as a matter of course, by Ministers towards their Irish opponents, and the studied disregard of Nationalist sentiments and feelings which, even when no public object was to be gained, marked these dark years of Unionist policy; and with all his determination never in any degree weakened to maintain the Union, it was in the conduct of Irish affairs from 1887 to 1890 that he realised most acutely his differences with the Government, and out of which his open quarrel with the Conservative party ultimately sprang.

The retirement of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach from the Irish Office on account of his eyesight was the first blow.

'I waited till I got home,' Lord Randolph wrote on March 30, 'before writing to you, as I did not know where a letter might find you: but I feel sure no letter from me was needed for you to be convinced how profoundly grieved I was at your having to give up official work, and at the cause. I knew you had trouble before you, but was in great hopes that it might have been for long delayed. I saw Roose yesterday, and it was very pleasant to hear him assert with confidence that you would be as strong and well as ever before the close of the year. Indeed, you are a great loss to Ireland and to the party and to me. Now that you are gone, there is no one in the Government I care a rap about. . . . I should so much like to see you and have a long talk. I have as yet seen none of my late colleagues, nor do I want to. Don't trouble to answer this; but

1887 believe that there is no one who more truly and Æt. 38 earnestly wishes for your renewed health and strength.'

The Land Bill opened various difficulties. Many of the Liberal-Unionists thought it inadequate, and both Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Randolph had decided opinions of their own upon several of its most important clauses. All through the summer of 1887 these two disinherited chiefs of democracy drew closely together. They were both, as Mr. Chamberlain describes it, 'adrift from the regular party organisations.' Yet each possessed great influence in Parliament and the country. It was natural that the idea of some Central party should present itself to their minds in a favourable light. And, indeed, the increasing weakness of the Government in the House of Commons and the apparently uncertain character of its majority made such speculations very reasonable. On at least two occasions a defeat in Committee on the Land Bill appeared certain; and in that emergency only a coalition headed by Lord Hartington and strengthened by both Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill could have prevented the return of the Home Rulers to power, with a disastrous election to follow. In many letters and in several speeches the idea of a 'National party' recurs. In July the situation appeared so critical and the prospects of a collapse so imminent that Lord Hartington himself seems to have regarded the reconstruction of the Government as inevitable. In that event it was known that the two democratic leaders stood together and that neither would enter any Cabinet without the other. 1887 ÆT. 38

The crisis passed, and with it the agreement. With the best will in the world Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Randolph Churchill found it very difficult to work in close accord. Their opinions were nearly alike, but their political positions were different. They had similar aims, but divergent antagonisms. The disputes within a party are always fiercer than those between regular political opponents and their rage burns long in the breast. Mr. Chamberlain had resigned from Mr. Gladstone's Cabinet, and his attitude tended to become mainly one of opposition to him. All other political leaders, of whatever complexion, stood more or less in shadow. Lord Randolph, on the other hand, had resigned from Lord Salisbury's Cabinet and the differences which most concerned him were those which separated him from the 'old gang.' Hence that strenuous alliance which was the necessary foundation of the National party was, from the very outset, subjected to perilous strains. Further difficulties arose from the topography of the House of Commons. The two friends sat on opposite sides of the House. No intercourse in the Chamber was possible without exciting notice and perhaps remark. On the other hand, the shifting course of the debates made constant consultings indispensable to harmonious action. Without them misunderstandings and disagreements were bound to arise. Both men formed strong and immediate opinions on every small point that arose. Both spoke with dangerous

1887 Æt. 38 facility. Both had sharp tongues and some readiness to use them when provoked. During the long-drawn session of 1887 several petty disagreements, taking the form of public expression, arose.

One of these incidents occurred during the consideration of the bankruptcy clauses of the Irish Land Bill, August 1, 1887. The subject was technical, and the issue mixed. Lord Randolph Churchill had made a short argumentative speech upon an amendment which had been moved from the Liberal-Unionist benches. Mr. Chamberlain followed, and took a totally different line. 'The noble lord,' he said, 'has not told the Committee how he intends to vote on this amendment.' Lord Randolph said he would vote with the Government. 'I confess,' said Mr. Chamberlain, 'I did not come to that conclusion from his speech. I thought the noble lord intended to support the amendment, and upon that I was going to point out to him that the greater part of his speech was against it.' He then proceeded to indicate considerable differences with Lord Randolph on the merits of the question. The House was in Committee, and both men could therefore speak again. Lord Randolph referred to Mr. Chamberlain's opening remarks as 'a characteristic sneer.' 'The right honourable gentleman evidently does not understand the process of differing from one's party and yet supporting it. On this question of the Irish land I hold certain opinions which I have ventured —I hope, with moderation—to press very rarely—I think, only three times—on Her Majesty's Government. And then, if the Government have not altogether agreed with these opinions, I do not think it necessary to assume that the Government are entirely wrong or that I am infallibly right. Well, on the whole, I adhere to my view of the case. I see nothing inconsistent in supporting them after the remarks I have made—not in a dictatorial, but in a pleading manner.' Mr. Chamberlain's retort was prompt and sharp. He denied that he had intended a sneer of any kind. He was sincerely in doubt as to how Lord Randolph would have voted. 'I am rather glad,' he said, 'that this incident has occurred, inasmuch as it has enabled the noble lord to pay me a compliment; and I can assure him that, coming from him, I very much value it. The noble lord said that I, at any rate, am not one of those who differ from their party and yet support it; neither am I one who speaks one way and votes another.' There the matter dropped so far as the House of Commons was concerned. Mr. Chamberlain wrote the next day to put matters right. 'I hope,' he said, 'that in this case it is *ira amantium redintegratio amoris.*'

Lord Randolph was not, however, easily placated. 'I freely confess,' he replied, 'that I had viewed your action last night with the greatest possible surprise and some vexation, which I thought proper to express. When on Clause IV. you took similar action, hostile to my views, I refrained from any public comment. I am quite at a loss to understand why you have thought it necessary on two occasions within a week to express in a most marked manner your

1887 entire disagreement with me; but I am sure you have
ÆT. 38 excellent reasons for all you do.'

This ill-humour lasted only a few days. Within the week the two men were dining and consulting with each other on personal terms as friendly as before. Yet some scars seem to have smarted, for there are signs in Lord Randolph's correspondence that from this date he began to draw more closely in matters political towards Lord Hartington, and less freely to confide in his former ally. One morning soon after this Lord Randolph and Mr. Chamberlain went for a walk together in Hyde Park. They discussed the whole position in the frankest way and decided by mutual consent to work independently and to pursue the objects they sought in common by separate paths. Thus ended that intimate political understanding which had united these fiery spirits during the period of storm in a comradeship which had not been without its effects upon public affairs. They parted, with many expressions of goodwill, to follow after a time different roads and to face in the end contrasted fortunes. Their alliance had been brief. Even in the few years with which this account is concerned, they will be seen in sharp antagonism. Yet both were accustomed to preserve, amid the inexhaustible vicissitudes of politics, pleasant memories of those exciting and eventful days.

With this separation the prospects of a National party fade again into that dreamland whence so many have wished to recall them. Few, indeed, are the politicians who have not cherished these visions at times when ordinary party machinery is not at their disposal. To build from the rock a great new party —free alike from vested interests and from holy formulas, able to deal with national problems on their merits, patient to respect the precious bequests of the past, strong to drive forward the wheels of progress—is without doubt a worthy ideal. Alas, that the degeneracy of man should exclude it for ever from this wicked world!

Late in August Ministers determined to put their powers under the Crimes Act into force. All the independent men who kept them in office, seem to have been pained and dismayed by this decision. They feared its effects upon the majority, and doubted its necessity in Ireland.

'I am desperately puzzled,' wrote Lord Randolph to Lord Hartington (August 20), 'to know what line to take about this last action of the Government. I disapprove of it profoundly, but distrust my own opinion—all the more that I do not know what special information Ministers have to support their action. There is unquestionably a smack of vindictiveness about the proclamation, *prima facie*, which the country will be quick to feel. This, coupled with their singular treatment of the Land Act, cannot produce a good effect. I am anxious to know whether, before their final decision, they secured your concurrence, as in that case I should keep my opinions to myself and give a silent vote in their support.

'I have a letter from Chamberlain showing considerable irritation and impatience at your last

1887 communication to him, and great alarm for the future ÆT. 38 and his future; but he says he has decided to postpone any action tending to emphasise any difference of opinion between yourself and him. This, however, was written apparently before he was aware of the proclamation of the League and I do not know what effect that may produce on him.'

Lord Hartington's measured reply makes plain the debt which the Conservative Government owed to this grave, calm, slow-moving man:—

Private. Bolton Abbey, Skipton: August 21, 1887.

My dear Churchill,—The Government did not obtain or ask for my concurrence before deciding on the proclamation of the League. They have throughout on this question seemed disposed to take their own course and have not consulted me, as they have done on other subjects. The first I heard of it was from A. Balfour, who told me some weeks ago that they would probably proclaim before the end of the Session.

I have had several conversations with Smith, Goschen, and Balfour, in which I have expressed my serious doubts as to the policy of the measure, although I could not tell what information they might have from Ireland. They seem to have felt, and I cannot complain of it, that this was a measure rather of Executive responsibility than of policy, and to have rather carefully abstained from asking me to share their responsibility with them. I also have felt that, not being able to share it with them, I could not press them very strongly on a matter in which they had knowledge which I did not possess.

I sent Balfour a very strong letter of remonstrance from Chamberlain, telling him at the same time from myself that the proclamation appeared to be open to every sort of

Parliamentary and political objection, but that I could not tell what information they might have as to its necessity.

I shall come up on Wednesday night or Thursday, if it is settled to take the debate on Thursday.

Yours sincerely,
HARTINGTON.

Lord Randolph, though reluctant and disquieted, was willing to acquiesce in this sober opinion. From FitzGibbon, who wrote to him distressfully, he did not hide his dissatisfaction:—

'I am against this proclamation business—as, I imagine, are most people of common sense and possessing knowledge of Ireland. But I must keep my opinion to myself and give a silent vote for the Government. It is no use finding fault with H. M. G. They are stupid, and there is no more to be said. I think there is nothing extravagant or improbable in the supposition that the G.O.M. will be Prime Minister before next Easter.' And he added, with more shrewdness, 'The Land Bill has been sadly mismanaged. I fear nothing will kill Home Rule except a second trial by Gladstone and a second failure.'

But Chamberlain was the gloomiest of all. Nothing can exceed the despondency of his letters at this time. He refrained, at the earnest requests of Lord Hartington and Lord Randolph Churchill, from publishing his alternative plan of Irish Local Government which he believed the political situation required. He never wavered for an hour as to his own course. The darker the Unionist horizon, the more uncompromising was his attitude

1887 ÆT. 38 towards the Gladstonians. But he evidently expected the speedy downfall of the Government and perhaps the triumph of Repeal. Throughout the autumn he faced the public with deep anxiety at his heart. 'Every day of Coercion,' wrote this experienced judge of electoral possibilities (October 2), 'adds to the Gladstonian strength, and I see no probability that the strong measures which are disgusting our friends in England, will effectually dispose of the League in Ireland. . . . I cannot see how Mr. G. can be kept out much longer. If he comes back he will dissolve and most of the Liberal-Unionists will go to the wall. I do not feel absolutely certain of a single seat, though I think that I am safe myself. Then he will propose and carry his new plan, whatever that may be. I expect we shall not like it any better than the old one.' From these embarrassments he was glad to depart altogether, and the Government, not perhaps without cunning, suggested an attractive and important mission to the United States to negotiate a fishery treaty. He left England late in November, and did not return till March in the New Year. This interval gave practical effect to his political separation from Lord Randolph Churchill.

In the meanwhile the session ended and His Majesty's Government—as Governments do in a changeable world—ran for the time out of storms into calmer water. Lord Randolph continued in a twilight mood. He disliked the Ministry; but did his best so far as he truthfully could to sustain their policy. In the winter he revolved plans for an Irish Education Bill, and endeavoured to pick up again the threads he had been forced to drop incontinently two years before.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Lord Justice FitzGibbon.

2 Connaught Place, W.: November 21, 1887.

This should be the plan of campaign. Assume that you are a benevolent despot with unlimited power for carrying out your own sweet will in respect of a legal solution of the Education Question:

1. Draw your Bill as per documents forwarded to me.
2. Ascertain from Walsh how far the draft meets with his concurrence and would secure his support; or what modifications or extensions would be necessary to that end. And, further, whether, if you and he are agreed, he and his party would desire that I should submit the matter to the House of Commons.

I have a better chance, I think, of carrying a Bill than the Government; for, although I have not the Government command of the time of the House, I can put very considerable pressure upon them to give me facilities, and it would be much easier for the Irish to support a private member than to accept anything whatever at the hands of a Coercion Government. Moreover, I feel confident of Liberal-Unionist support and, being very friendly with John Morley, I feel pretty sure of his benevolent neutrality—probably of his assistance also.

I will assent to, and assume Parliamentary responsibility for, any scheme which you and the Archbishop can agree upon. I do not think there is any difficulty as to the position of a private member proposing a grant of public money for certain purposes. The transfer of the expenditure on Model Schools to other purposes is certainly within the power of a private member.

When you have got your scheme drafted, and feel sure of your Archbishop, then I will get hold of Beach, and approach the Government. I cannot move until I get a draft Bill.

For strategic purposes, leave alone Erasmus Smith, Incorporated Society, Irish Society and London Companies; so that, if I am troubled by factious opposition from those interests, I may threaten reprisals by moving to appropriate radically their resources.

Would you approve of making your Bill very comprehensive and in three parts?

1. Elementary (see your paragraph, p. 18, of your Report).
2. Intermediate (see following paragraph).
3. University (*i.e.* the creation of a Catholic University out of the existing Royal University, endowed by the moneys now paid to the Queen's Colleges, and as a subsidiary measure a "Stincomalee" at Belfast).

A large Bill often moves through the House, by its own momentum, with greater ease than a small one, and the prospect of abolition of the Model Schools and the godless Colleges would, I think, be a lure which the Catholic clergy and laity would greedily swallow.

Your great organising mind could easily arrange a Bill of this dimension, and many circumstances lead me to think that the moment is very propitious for the launching of such a scheme.

2 Connaught Place, W.: February 6, 1888.

I think the education matter had better wait until you are able to come over to London and we can thrash it out together in conversation. Walsh's absence is decisive against doing anything yet. Perhaps H. M. G. contemplate moving on their own account. Do not say anything to them to give them the idea that you and I contemplate moving.

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2 Connaught Place, W.: February 10, 1888.

I hope you will come over soon and arrange to remain several days. The Session comes in like a lamb. I am reminded of the earlier Sessions of the 1874 Parliament. I saw H.E. the Lord-Lieutenant yesterday; he tells me he often sees you, which I am glad of. The inconceivable apathy of the House of Lords prevented H.E. from delivering his views on Ireland; I am very sorry he was not able to speak. I have to give an address on the Irish Question to the Oxford Union on the 22nd. This must be a grave and moderate statement of our case. Do, if you have time, send me some good and novel views and, if possible, some effective references and quotations.

2 Connaught Place, W.: February 15, 1888.

It was very good of you writing me such a long letter and sending me so much good information. My thoughts, however, when I was preparing my speech for the Oxford Union led me away from the line you suggested and I fear you will think that I gave you a lot of trouble all for nothing. Balfourism acts like a blister on Ireland and the Irish, and has the bad and good effects which such treatment generally produces. A too protracted application of the blister might do much harm.

Doncaster came in the nick of time. I think we shall probably hold Deptford. Things look fairly well in Parliament. There are hints and insinuations from some quarters as to my rejoining the Government. I am, however, very happy and contented where I am, and usually able to exert a good deal of influence if I take the trouble, without being saddled with any inconvenient responsibilities. I hope you will be running over soon.

2 Connaught Place, W.: July 14, 1888.

I wish very much we could meet the Archbishop's views. It is a great pity that Irish education should be complicated and embarrassed by other political questions. Next year, if all is well, we must make a great effort to get forward. I hope to be in Ireland the end of August or beginning of September; and if so, perhaps I may have the great advantage of personally ascertaining the Archbishop's opinions.

If I can only attain full agreement with him I do not anticipate any difficulty with the Cabinet. The present moment is most propitious for action. Later on we may become again involved in the chaotic and whirling conflict of Home Rule, and education will be indefinitely postponed.

From the oratory of the recess and the rumours of reconstruction Lord Randolph hurried away upon an expedition to which he had for some months past been looking forward. To travel abroad, particularly in Europe, always amused him; and he found no better relaxation after a spell of political activity than in new scenes, fresh men and another atmosphere. He had always wanted to visit Russia; and to go there now, in circumstances personally so convenient and when the international situation was full of interest, was a project to him very attractive. Like most men whose lot it is to live a part of their lives on the world's stage, to mingle with large crowds and to submit themselves to public comment or applause, he was especially jealous of the privacy of his holidays; and in order to prevent gossip of various kinds he had allowed it to be understood that he would spend a part of the winter in Spain. This device succeeded admirably until he was discovered about to start for St. Petersburg.

Then the newspapers awoke. The Continental press manufactured rumours with that fertile ingenuity for which it has always been distinguished, and on these the London newspapers dilated with preternatural gravity. The *Times* led the way with a solemn warning to the Czar not to be misled, as his predecessor had been by a certain Quaker deputation on the eve of the Crimean War, by any assurances of British friendship which might be offered by the 'most versatile and volatile' of English politicians. Lesser journals were less restrained. All the gossip of the previous year was revived. He was making a political journey. He was charged with a secret mission. He was an 'officious' ambassador from Lord Salisbury. He was gathering materials for a campaign against the Government. If he were neither for nor against the Government, why should he be there at all? Why, except for grave reasons of State, should a man not physically robust exchange Spain for Russia in December? It was understood Lord Randolph was to seek health and warmth in the South; but here, in midwinter, he was 'deserting the Guadalquivir for the Neva, and the sun of Seville for the snows of St. Petersburg.' That he was 'accompanied by his wife' was apparently a matter of additional significance. The explanation that he was going to Russia as a tourist because he wanted to see Russia and the Russian Court was offered by his friends. But no one was so simple as to believe that; and at length an official *communiqué* was published from the Foreign Office: 'Lord

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Randolph Churchill has no mission from the Government to M. de Giers. His presence in St. Petersburg is wholly without the knowledge of the Foreign Office and he has no official status'; and then followed a sentence which seemed to bear the marks of a certain sharply pointed pen—'His lordship alone knows why he gave up a contemplated Spanish tour for a visit to northern latitudes.' After this the lower Ministerial press struck a different note. The Czar would refuse to see a vulgar globe-trotter. There was no person whom the Russians more heartily despised than the member for Paddington—'a boastful, rattling, noisy egotist with no principle and, apparently, with no conception of duty or honour.'

Meanwhile the object of this merry chatter was enjoying himself. When the word has gone forth in Russia that a visitor is to be well received, he need not trouble himself about details. Everything moves *sur les roulettes*; railway officials and Custom House officers are transformed into attentive servants—often a considerable transformation; carriages are reserved in every train; and luggage passes untouched through every cordon. Lord Randolph arrived expeditiously at St. Petersburg, assailed by newspaper correspondents—'mischievous people' whom he refused to see (after all, they must live, like everybody else)—and met by his friends from the Embassy. The next day he saw M. de Giers; and the day after the Czar, without waiting for the usual New Year's Day reception, summoned him to Gatschina. Lord Randolph has left a carefully written account of his conversation with this great personage, which I have but slightly abbreviated. After driving in bright sun and bitter cold to the Winter Palace, and long delays, relieved by cups of tea, in interminable corridors adorned by wonderfully dressed servants with *panaches* of red and orange ostrich feathers, he was conducted to the Emperor's apartment. The Czar was sitting at a large writing-table in a small *cabinet d'affaires*, and told his visitor to seat himself on a low yellow banquette on the opposite side of the table. After cigarettes had been produced and lighted, the conversation began in French, 'which,' writes Lord Randolph, 'was a great disappointment to me, for he can speak English perfectly; and sometimes he talked rather low and in his beard, so that I, who do not hear very well, missed some of his remarks.'

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Lord Randolph's account proceeds:—

'After some general observations as to the time when he was in England last and when I was presented to him, and inquiries as to my stay in Russia and intentions of going to Moscow, His Majesty said: "Well, I hope you have been long enough in St. Petersburg to find out that we are not so terribly warlike as we are made out to be." I replied that I did not think that anyone in England of information had the smallest doubts of the strong desire of His Majesty for peace and of the reluctance of the Russian Government to go to war. This had been abundantly shown by several incidents in the course of the last two years. The Czar remarked that the

1888 Æt. 39 English journals were very bitter against Russia and attributed all sorts of malignant intentions to her. He added that he had been told that some of them were subsidised by Monsieur de Bismarck and excited against Russia by him. I told him that I could not think there was any foundation for the last statement, though I had heard a story of the * * * * having been paid by Monsieur de Bismarck to insert some months ago some startling announcement as to the relations between Germany and France; but that it was said that one of the proprietors had lost a large sum of money owing to the fall in securities which followed that announcement. Speaking generally on the question of English journals, I expressed a hope that His Majesty would not pay much attention to the remarks of English newspapers; that no public man in England ever cared a rap for anything they said; that they were quite irresponsible, and on foreign affairs as a rule very ill-informed. I particularly urged the non-importance of the London press as any guide to English public opinion, which was far better expressed and followed by the provincial press and the leading daily journals of our large towns. His Majesty seemed struck by this and said that some one had told him the same thing once before.

'After saying that he had a great wish to go to England for the purpose of ascertaining the drift of English policy, he asked after Mr. Gladstone and whether there was any chance of his returning to office. I replied that Mr. Gladstone was very old and aged, that there seemed to be no reason why the present Parliament should not last for three or four years, and that it was hardly conceivable that after that period Mr. Gladstone would be physically capable of official duty, even if other circumstances were favourable. This latter contingency was extremely remote, as in my opinion the combination of parties against him was too strong to be resisted, and would probably keep the Opposition out of office for years. In a word, that no rational politician would count on Mr. Gladstone's return to office as a practical factor in politics. His Majesty appearing to be under the impression that the breach between Mr. Gladstone and the party of Lord Hartington was not a very irreparable one, and might be made up, I told His Majesty that at the commencement that was so, but the course of events during this year had hopelessly embittered the quarrel; and that Lord Hartington had taken up, with the assent of his followers, a very strong position of opposition in general to Mr. Gladstone, mainly on account of their conviction that Mr. Gladstone's internal policy was anarchical. His Majesty asked after several other public men—Lord Granville (*un homme charmant*), Lord Derby, Mr. Goschen.

'His Majesty then went on to say that he was anxious to have visited England in order to have a full explanation with Lord Salisbury "*jusqu'à présent l'ennemi acharné de la Russie*." I reminded His Majesty that at the time of the Conference of Constantinople Lord Salisbury had by no means been such an enemy, but that at that time he probably had great sympathy for Russia; that after that events had taken an unfortunate turn, and that Lord Beaconsfield's influence had prevailed, and English policy been directed into an anti-Russian groove; but I also reminded His Majesty that Lord Salisbury had in August last made a speech at the Mansion House—which, coming from him, was of great significance—which was marked by a tone of perfect friendship for Russia and a strong belief in the possibility of good relations between the two countries.

'His Majesty did not disagree to all this, and said he hoped it was so, as he must have an understanding (or settlement) with England *une fois pour toutes*. These words he repeated more than once in the conversation. I said the great difficulty between us had been the Central Asian Question. He said it ought not to be a difficulty any longer, that the Russians wanted no more, that they had more than they could manage; but that the policy of the neutral zone had altogether broken down and proved to be nonsense; that the two Powers must be *limitrophes*, that we were making a great mistake in still pursuing the neutral-zone policy by insisting on the independence of Afghanistan, which we ought to take and govern ourselves. To this I replied, in the first place, that I had never understood that Afghan territories were included in any neutral zone; that, on the contrary, I thought it had always been accorded that Afghanistan was outside Russian influence and must be solely under British influence. To this His Majesty said nothing. I went on to say that it was vital to us in India to exclude all foreign influence from Afghanistan, and to retain its government under our sole guidance; that we could not tolerate the smallest departure from this principle, and I said that if His Majesty thought we were too strong and unyielding on this matter he had only to recollect the essential nature of the Indian Government—250,000 whites ruling 250 million *indigènes*; that a Government of that kind rested almost entirely on its *morale* and prestige; and that *la moindre attente* against its prestige, if not promptly and effectively dealt with, might become the gravest wound; that any attempt to exercise influence other than British in Afghanistan would be such an *attente*. I went on to say that our position was not perhaps quite logical; for that, holding such opinions, we ought to take Afghanistan. This, I said, we could not do, as public opinion and the Parliament would be invincibly opposed to any such large extension of our Indian Empire, except under circumstances of the most critical and forcible character; that that was our position—that while we could allow no interference by others we would not assume the responsibility of direct government by ourselves; and that it seemed to me that a frank acceptance of that position would be essential to any understanding between the two countries. His Majesty having commented generally on this, and having contrasted our position with his own as regarded Khiva and Bokhara—which, he averred, were now most tranquil and prosperous, instead of utterly disordered as they used to be—went on to

1888 — ÆT. 39 speak of the European position as it affected the two countries.

'"With regard to the Black Sea and the Dardanelles, if you desire peace and friendship with Russia, you must not mix yourselves up there against us. We will never suffer," His Majesty said, with some slight approach to excitement, "any other Power to hold the Dardanelles except the Turks or ourselves; and if the Turks ultimately go out, it is by Russians that they will be succeeded."

'I replied that I had always understood that that was the Russian view, and that I would offer no criticism or comment on it, as it appeared to me to be too speculative for practical purposes; that as regarded present European difficulties Constantinople was in no way *en jeu*; and that I did not think that questions concerning its ultimate fate ought to disturb relations between England and Russia.

'With respect to Bulgaria I expressed my own strong opinion that England had no direct or important interests in that part of Europe and that it could be no object to us to oppose the exercise of what I admitted was legitimate Russian influence there; that, if we had any interests, they were purely platonic, on behalf of liberty generally, and springing from a general anxiety that treaties should be maintained; beyond that they did not go. I added that in my opinion the policy of the Crimean War, which was also adopted in '76-'78 by England, had come to an end with the election of 1880 and was not likely to be renewed or resumed; that the English people were not likely to fight for the Turks, nor for the Bulgarians; and that they were not likely to associate themselves with Austria; that the policy which the English people would prefer about that part of Europe was complete neutrality and non-intervention. I said more than once that I knew nothing whatever of the Government policy; that I had no connection with the Government, direct or indirect; that I only spoke as one who had had much opportunity of learning the disposition of Parliament and the tendency of opinion among the people. 1888 ÆT. 39

'His Majesty asked me if the views I had expressed were shared by Lord Hartington. I replied that it was almost impossible to say accurately what Lord Hartington's views were, as he was a man of remarkable reserve, but His Majesty would recollect that from 1880 to 1885, when the English Government pursued in Europe a policy which was certainly one of friendship and loyalty to Russia and of undisguised indifference as to the fate of the Turk, Lord Hartington was, after Mr. Gladstone, the leading man in that Government, and that I had no reason to suppose that he had in any way receded from the foreign policy he then contributed to give effect to. His Majesty, speaking about Egypt, said that Russia had no desire to interfere with us there in any way. On the contrary, they had no interests in that country. He added that he did not see why England and France should not be perfectly good friends on all Egyptian matters. To this I replied that understandings with France appeared to be impossible; that not

1888 only did Governments succeed each other there
ÆT. 39 with hopeless rapidity, but that the very form of Government in France was ephemeral. To this His Majesty quite assented, and said: "Well, if you like, you have a great task before you on your return to England—to improve the relations between Russia and England." I replied that for some time past I had worked in that direction and should continue to do so, although in certain quarters, Parliamentary and otherwise, my views had not hitherto been regarded with favour; but that I had formed a strong opinion that a thorough understanding between England and Russia was possible and would be of the greatest advantage to both. I added that I had said nothing, either to His Majesty or to M. de Giers, which I had not very often said to Lord Salisbury while I was his colleague.

'His Majesty, who throughout the interview had been wonderfully kind, quiet and simple, talking evidently with unreserve and allowing me to do the same without displeasure, then brought to a close a conversation which had lasted for about forty-five minutes.'

The next day Lord and Lady Randolph had intended to go to Moscow; but an invitation, equal to a command, to a party at Gatschina, delayed them. 'It was,' wrote Lord Randolph, 'certainly a very pretty and interesting sight. The Emperor and the Empress were very kind to us, and I sat at supper, at the Empress's table, between the Grand Duchess Elizabeth (daughter of the Duke of Hesse and very beautiful) and the Grand Duchess Catharine. I made the acquaintance of some interesting people, *entre autres* of General Ignatieff. M. de Giers sat by me during most of the play. There was first a French play, then a quartette from *Rigoletto*, then the duo from *The Huguenots*, then a Russian play (quite unintelligible), and then another French play. The programme was too long. Between the pieces the Emperor and Empress walked about and spoke to people, and there was a large buffet where everyone went and lapped. The whole thing was splendidly done.'

The marked consideration shown to the English visitor increased the gossip—good-humoured and spiteful alike—at home; and in the Russian capital, where everyone takes his cue from the Czar, Lord and Lady Randolph for some days almost engrossed the attention of Society and the press. Reporters and telegram agents hovered gloomily round the hotel from morn till dusk. Skating parties, in which Lady Randolph much distinguished herself, and visits to important people occupied the days, and banquets and receptions the nights. Long tours through peerless galleries and museums, where Lord Randolph recognised with regret not a few alienated Blenheim treasures; a flying visit to Moscow; the 'Blessing of the Waters' on the feast of the Epiphany, 'when the Emperor had to stand bareheaded in the cold for a good long time'; a rout of 800 persons given in his honour by Lady Morier at the British Embassy, were among the incidents of a

1888 brilliant fortnight. 'I am sure in England,' Lord Æt. 39 Randolph wrote to his mother, 'it would bore me dreadfully to go to all these dinners and parties and things, but here it amuses me. I wonder why it is. . . . You must not believe a word the newspapers say. I was most careful and guarded in all my communications and confined myself to general beaming upon everyone. Lord S. may or may not be angry, but I am certain that my going to Russia has had a good effect and can at any rate do no harm.'

He lingered a little on the homeward journey both in Berlin and Paris.

To his Mother.

British Embassy, Berlin.

Here we are very comfortable. I never travelled with so much circumstance before. The Malets are most kind and anxious to make everything very pleasant. On Monday night the opera, where was represented all Berlin Society *en grande tenue*; the old Emperor looking very brisk. Yesterday the picture gallery, in which I observed three Blenheim pictures—the Fornarina by Raphael (now called a Sebastian del Piombo), the Andromeda of Rubens and the great Bacchanalia picture by Rubens. . . . To-night Malet has an immense feast—thirty-six persons. I went this morning to Potsdam to write my name on Prince William, who called on us yesterday and saw Jennie while I was out. Then luncheon with Herbert Bismarck—very pleasant—no one else but Herr von Pothenberg, Prince Bismarck's *chef de cabinet*. We talked very freely for a long time, and drank a great deal of beer, champagne, claret, sherry and brandy! H. B. is delightful, so frank and honest. . . . I have not a doubt that the Chancellor kept away purposely. He is a *grincheux* old creature, and knows quite well that I will use all my influence, as I have done, to prevent Lord S. from being towed in his wake. . . . Some correspondents have been to see me, but I have been very snubby to them. 1888 — ÆT. 39

And so back to England, pursued by rumours with which the *Times* thought it worth while to fill three columns of its foreign telegrams.

CHAPTER XX

CROSS CURRENTS

'Surely there is no better way to stop the rising of sects and schisms than to reform abuses; to compound the smaller differences; to proceed mildly, and not with sanguinary persecutions; and rather to take off the principal authors, by winning and advancing them, than to enrage by violence and bitterness.'—BACON.

1888 Æt. 39 SIXTEEN months had passed, after Lord Randolph Churchill resigned, before he became involved in a serious and open difference with the Conservative Government. That he was separated from them by sentiment and conviction, not only upon various considerable questions of method; but upon the general character and temper of their policy, has been abundantly explained. But his misgivings were concealed from the public by his consistent defence of the Union, by an unaffected partisanship and by the lively attacks which he made upon the Opposition. It is true that the criticisms upon naval and military administration which had been a necessary feature of his crusade of economy had naturally won him little favour in Ministerial circles, and his open independence of the official leaders could not be welcomed by his party. But the details of departmental administration, though of immense practical importance, do not usually raise, and ought scarcely ever to raise, questions of confidence and loyalty. The efficient conduct of the services and the doctrines of public thrift are—formally, at least—included in the principles of both great political organisations. Except at rare intervals, they lie apart from the ordinary scope of Parliamentary conflict; and their discussion should never seriously divide political associates. But Ireland opened chasms of a very different kind.

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When Sir Michael Hicks-Beach recovered his eyesight, Lord Salisbury was anxious for him to rejoin the Government and offered him—no other post being vacant—the Presidency of the Board of Trade. Beach, for whom office had few attractions, who was on many questions in full sympathy with Lord Randolph, and who was always bound to him by firm friendship, was in no hurry to accept. He proposed to Lord Randolph, as they walked down one day to the House together, that he should decline Lord Salisbury's offer and that they should both sit together and work together for the rest of the Parliament. Lord Randolph would not, however, countenance this generous attempt to relieve the isolation of his position. He urged Sir Michael to join the Government. 'They need you,' he said, 'and besides, I shall like to feel I have one friend there' (February 1888).

During the whole of 1887 Lord Randolph had regularly supported his late colleagues. Any opinions he had expressed on the Budget and the Land Bill had been of a friendly nature and in the interests of

1888 ÆT. 39 those measures. He had joined in the debates of the House with the same tone and intention as he would have spoken in the Cabinet. No divergence of principle on a dominant issue had yet occurred. The Government had acted—however uninspiringly—in conformity with the main lines of the policy declared at the General Election. It was not until the year 1888 that the question of Irish Local Government and the Suakin operations provoked a definite and notorious disagreement. On both these matters Lord Randolph Churchill had made public declarations of the plainest character in Opposition or as Leader of the House of Commons, and to those pledges he adhered with a truly Quixotic disregard of his personal interests.

'On this question of Local Government,' Lord Randolph had stated in August 1886, speaking in the House of Commons in the name of the Conservative party, and with the full authority of the Cabinet as a whole, of the Prime Minister, of the Chief Secretary of the day, and of the leaders of the Liberal Unionists—'the great sign-posts of our policy are equality, similarity and, if I may use such a word, simultaneity, as far as is practicable, in the development of a genuinely popular system of Local Government in the four countries which form the United Kingdom.' The months had slipped away. A year and a half were gone. When Lord Randolph left the Government their good resolutions in respect of Ireland faded. Their pledges were long to remain unredeemed. The arguments appropriate to such occasions were employed: the circumstances had changed; the disaffection of the people was patent; the Irish were unfitted by character and history for popular institutions.

It was a Wednesday afternoon (April 25), and under the old rules of procedure the House rose at half-past five. A Nationalist member had moved the second reading of an Irish County Government Bill, roughly designed to merge boards of guardians, lunatic asylum boards and town commissioners in smaller towns into county councils. To this a reasoned amendment was moved, with the concurrence of the Government, by a private member from the Unionist benches, setting forth the inexpediency at that time of introducing any large constitutional change in Ireland. Mr. Gladstone spoke in support of the Bill, and Mr. Balfour made an airy reply, instancing the improper conduct of Irish local bodies and declaring that that country was not fit for any extension of Local Government. Something in his easy manner, thus dismissing unceremoniously—almost, as it seemed, unconsciously—solemn pledges elaborately given to the electorate at a time of choice, and renewed in Parliament after the decision, seems to have stirred Lord Randolph's blood. He got up immediately the Chief Secretary finished. Speaking with much restraint, but with sufficient sharpness of manner to prevent him referring to his old comrade as a 'right honourable friend,' he reminded the Government and the swiftly-offended party of the declarations by which they were bound, and the authority upon which those declarations had been made.

'All the circumstances,' he said, 'upon which the Chief Secretary has enlarged this afternoon, showing the defects which exist in the working of popular institutions in Ireland and the dangers that might be anticipated from their extension, were before the Government of Lord Salisbury at the time when they had to take a decision—a most momentous decision—upon this question. . . . The idea of the Government at that time was that a certain just extension, within reasonable limits, of Local Government in Ireland was to be looked upon as a remedy for the great evils which have been dwelt upon by the Chief Secretary. . . . I recollect that the pledges given by the Unionist party were large and liberal, were distinct and full, and that there was no reservation in those pledges with respect to all the defects pointed out this afternoon in the Irish character and in respect of Irish unfitness for Local Government—nothing of the kind. We pledged ourselves that we would at the very earliest opportunity extend to Ireland the same amount of Local Government which we might give to England and Scotland. I venture to say—and I do not care how much I am contradicted, or what the consequences may be—that that was the foundation of the Unionist party; and, more, that that is the only platform on which you can resist Repeal. If you are going to the English people, relying merely on the strength of your Executive power—if you are going to preach that the Irish must for an indefinite time be looked upon as an inferior community—unfit for the privileges which the English people enjoy—then

I tell you that you may retain that position for a time, but only for a time, and that the time will probably be a short one. . . . The words I used in representing the Government at that table were that in approaching this momentous question of Local Government we should do so with similarity, equality and simultaneity. The time has gone by altogether for me to bear, and I will be content no longer to bear, solely the responsibility of those words; and I do not think that there would be a *bona-fide* carrying-out of the policy I then announced if Ireland is not to have a measure of Local Government, until the state of order in that country is satisfactory to the Executive Government.'

Only a short time remained before the sitting must end. Chamberlain rose at once from the Front Opposition Bench and in a speech of four minutes said that he should vote with the Government on the understanding that measures of local reform for Ireland were simply delayed by pressure of business. Before the Leader of the House could add anything to the debate Mr. Parnell moved the Closure—the Irish desiring to obtain the division usual on such private members' Bills—and the incident ended. But it left an estrangement behind.

The second quarrel did not arise till eight months later. In November 1888 the chronic skirmishing and raiding around Suakin developed into a regular blockade of that place, and the squalid, worthless, pestilential Red Sea port became again a bone of strife between brave men in the desert and wise men

1888 ÆT. 39 in the Senate. I do not need to remind the reader of the vehement attacks which Lord Randolph Churchill had made upon Mr. Gladstone's Egyptian policy, or of the support and approval which those attacks had received from the Conservative party and the Conservative press. No part of those strictures had been more effective or more violent than that which referred to the operations around Suakin. They had not, as many people on both sides of politics had believed and freely stated, been impelled mainly by a factious desire to discredit and embarrass Mr. Gladstone's Administration. That was, no doubt, an obvious contributory motive; but behind it lay a profound detestation of the purposeless bloodshed with which Soudan history, and especially Suakin history, had since 1883 been stained. 'I do not hesitate to say,' he declared in 1888, 'that I hate the Soudan. The idea to me of risking the life of a single British soldier in that part of the world is inexpressibly repugnant.' Whatever he might have thought at another time, when the finances of Egypt were restored and the Dervish fires had burnt low, of a methodical and scientific reconquest of the country, he was sincerely opposed in 1888, as in Mr. Gladstone's day, to the policy known as 'kill and retire.' It seemed to him the highest unwisdom, whether from a political or military point of view, to dispatch a single British battalion, swamped among four thousand Egyptian soldiers, with no other object, even if successful, than to fight a battle, decimate the hostile tribesmen and return. He recalled the small beginnings and the insufficient forces out of which great and far-reaching events in Zululand and in the Transvaal had sprung. And he did not lack, as was afterwards proved, the support of high authorities for his opinion. 'I can assure you,' telegraphed Lord Cromer (then Sir Evelyn Baring) to Lord Salisbury on December 6, 'that, unless great care is taken, the Government may be dragged into another big Soudan business almost before they are aware of it'; and, again, 'all sorts of arguments will probably be put forward about tranquillising the Soudan once and for all. I believe that these arguments are of very little value and that for the present the Soudan cannot be tranquillised without the re-occupation of Khartoum, which would require a large force.'[1]

On these subjects and in this tenor Lord Randolph delivered three speeches in the House of Commons, which were, as may be easily imagined, met with unstinted resentment by his party. He spoke first on December 1, a general debate on the vote for embassies and foreign missions having been raised by Mr. Morley; and three days later he moved the adjournment of the House. This step created extravagant surprise and anger. He rose, as the newspapers took care to point out, to make his motion absolutely alone on the Government side of the House. He was supported by the whole Opposition. He spoke—as, indeed, throughout the Parliament of 1886—with gravity and moderation, and made a quiet, earnest appeal to the House to prevent the renewal of the Soudan warfare. His motion for the adjournment was unexpected, and the Government were for some time, during the debate that followed, in a minority. At a quarter-past six, however, when the division was taken, they secured a majority of forty-two, although a half-dozen Conservatives—among whom Mr. Hanbury was probably the best-known—voted against them.

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[1] No. 119, Egypt No. 8, 1888, published January 12, 1889.

Loud and long was the expression of Ministerial wrath. 'In order to discredit his views,' wrote Jennings, in his preface to Lord Randolph Churchill's speeches 'it was necessary to bring into play those formidable weapons of misrepresentation which can never be used with greater effect than when they are directed by persons who have the entire machinery of a great party at their command.' He was accused forthwith of having laid a plot with the Opposition to destroy the Government on a snap division; and the 'treachery' and 'ingratitude' of such conduct were for some days a popular and fertile theme. He was even forced to defend himself in public from such imputations. His reply was explicit: '(1) If I had desired,' he wrote to an inquiring person, 'to snatch a surprise division on the motion for the adjournment of the House, which I made on Tuesday last with regard to Suakin, I should not have occupied fifty minutes of the time of the House with my own speech. (2) If I had desired by the aid of the Opposition to defeat the Government, I should not have selected an evening when the supporters of the Government, under the pressure of a five-line whip, were likely to be present in great numbers in order to take part in a division on an Irish vote which had been arranged to come off before the dinner-hour. (3) The fact of the matter is that the case against the Suakin expedition is so strong, and the line taken with respect to similar expeditions by the Tories when they were in Opposition was so marked, that I felt very confident of receiving appreciable support from the ranks of the Ministerialists. For that reason I welcomed every circumstance which was likely to bring together a full House.'

It is not suggested that Lord Randolph Churchill was unwilling to defeat the Government by his motion. Its object was to prevent the proposed action in the Soudan. That object could only have been attained by an adverse vote in the House of Commons. Whether such a vote would have involved the resignation of Ministers is uncertain. The pretence that a simple motion for adjournment, necessarily unaccompanied by any substantive censure of policy, should directly involve a change of Government is a modern abuse of Parliamentary practice. But even had the fate of the Government turned on the division—as, of course, they declared it would—conscientious conviction in an urgent matter of life and death would have fully justified Lord Randolph in the course he took. His action was reasonable, consistent and fair. Whether he was right on the merits of the question or as to its importance in relation to the general political situation, must be judged by others.

The Government profited both by the counsels which were offered them and by the result of their final decision. The British force despatched to Suakin was reinforced. The scope of the warfare was rigidly confined. Nothing that might prove extensive or entangling was permitted and, on the other hand, the limited operation was in itself completely successful. On December 21 an engagement was fought outside Suakin. The Dervishes were routed with heavy slaughter and driven away into the desert, whence—as it luckily happened—they did not subsequently choose to return in numbers sufficient to cause anxiety to the garrison or seriously disturb the peace of the Red Sea Littoral.

The speeches of Lord Randolph Churchill in Parliament during the years from 1887 to 1890 were the best in manner and command he ever made. He stood alone, surrounded by enemies who were once his supporters, and faced by opponents whose plaudits he did not desire; but if he had still been Leader of the House he could not have been more at his ease and more sure of himself. His style was serious enough to suit the dullest; and yet point after point was made with a clearness and rhetorical force to which the dullest could not be insensible. His voice penetrated everywhere without apparent effort. Every tone was full of meaning. He was sparing of gesture and cared little for oratorical ornament. He was always heard with profound attention by the House, with obvious anxiety by the Government, and usually in silence by the Conservative party.

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The inflence which he exerted upon the course of affairs outside the ordinary divisions of party was palpable and noteworthy. With the full consent of the Government he moved (February 16, 1888) the Address to the Crown, which being assented to unanimously by the House, called into being the Royal Commission upon the alleged corruption and improprieties of the Metropolitan Board of Works. When a member of Parliament had been guilty of a libel upon the Speaker, it was Lord Randolph Churchill who with formidable authority of manner, and complete mastery of Parliamentary practice, persuaded, and indeed compelled, the House to resolve his suspension for an entire month (July 20, 1888). One hot summer afternoon (June 27, 1888) he appeared unexpectedly in his place and practically laughed the Channel Tunnel Bill—supported though it was by Mr. Gladstone and many prominent Tories—out of the House of Commons. Sir Edward Watkin, the promoter, had explained a device by which a Minister of State by touching a button could in an instant blow up the entrance to the tunnel. 'Imagine,' exclaimed Lord Randolph, drawing an airy finger along the Treasury bench—'Imagine a Cabinet Council sitting in the War Office around the button. Fancy the present Cabinet gathered together to decide who should touch the button and when it should be touched.' He had intended to add, 'Fancy the right honourable member for Westminster (Mr. W. H. Smith) rising at length in his place with the words "I move that the button be now

1888 touched,"' but the laughter from all parties which Æt. 39 this diverting picture had already excited led him to forget the climax he had contemplated. The Bill was rejected by 307 to 165. Few private members, divorced alike from office and from the official Opposition, have in modern times been able by their unaided personal force so powerfully to sway the opinion of Parliament.

And now must be related an incident which, though not in itself of historical importance, created a great hubbub at the time and involved an open political dispute and severance between Lord Randolph Churchill and Mr. Chamberlain. Although Lord Randolph was comfortably settled in Paddington and enjoyed the luxury of a safe seat, he always hankered after Birmingham. Contact with a democratic electorate in a centre of active political thought was always personally very alluring to him; and it is singular that he never achieved his ambition of representing a popular constituency. But if these were general predilections, Birmingham offered attractions of its own. His association with the Birmingham Tories during the fighting days of 1884 and 1885 had formed ties of mutual regard and comradeship which proved strong enough—in the case of those who had come into personal touch with him, at any rate—to stand all the strains of the lean and melancholy years that followed. No amount of party disapprobation, of pressure from headquarters, of newspaper abuse, affected the faithfulness of those with whom he had fought side by side. They scorned every suggestion that he was 'disloyal' to the party. They held by him through thick and thin. In spite of the frowns of party leaders, and sometimes of real divergences of opinion, the controlling forces in the Midland Conservative Club were always unswerving in his support; and the last time he ever appeared on a public platform was in the Birmingham Town Hall.

There were, moreover, obvious reasons why, in the early part of 1889, Lord Randolph should have wished to be sustained by the vote of a great constituency. He was out of joint with his party. He was almost alone in the House of Commons. All the orthodox and official forces in the Conservative party were hostile to him. He had taken an independent course on various important questions, and that course had twice been directly opposed to Lord Salisbury's Government. There was asserted to be a definite compact between the local Conservative leaders in Birmingham and the Liberal-Unionists that, in the event of a vacancy in the Central Division, Lord Randolph Churchill was to be invited by both wings of the Unionist party to stand. This agreement was personal to Lord Randolph and particular to Birmingham, and quite independent of any general arrangement respecting Conservative and Liberal-Unionist seats; and a clear understanding to this effect existed between Lord Randolph and Mr. Chamberlain. There was, therefore, no doubt that if a vacancy occurred Lord Randolph had a right to stand and to look for the support of both sections

1888 ÆT. 39 of the party. If he did not stand himself, then only the nomination of a candidate would rest properly with the Liberal-Unionists. It was admitted that in such a contest he would be victorious by a majority of two or three thousand votes; and his friends believed, almost without exception, that such a victory, involving as it did a popular endorsement of all that he had done since he left the Cabinet, must enormously raise his prestige in Parliament and the country.

All through the year 1888 Mr. Bright lay desperately ill. At the end of May Mr. Chamberlain, who had just returned from his American trip, and who was still on most friendly terms with Lord Randolph, wrote to tell him that he feared the end was approaching, to ask what Lord Randolph would do, and to promise him support should he decide to stand. Lord Randolph replied (May 30, 1888): 'I hope Mr. Bright will get better. The news this morning is more favourable. In the event of a vacancy occurring, I should not leave Paddington unless it was the strong and unanimous wish of the Tories and of your party combined, and unless they were of opinion that there was real danger of the seat being lost if I did not stand. I do not imagine, however, that these two conditions are likely to arise. The seat is a Liberal-Unionist seat and that party has a clear right to put forward one of their own number, and to receive a full measure of Tory support.' These communications were on both sides informal. They did not in any way affect the compact. They were merely assurances as to what the writers would do personally under the compact as it existed, if the issue were raised at that time. The issue was not raised. Mr. Bright rallied and survived almost for another year. When he died, on March 27, 1889, quite a different situation had been created. Lord Randolph Churchill ardently desired to stand. Mr. Chamberlain was vehement to prevent him. The dispute that followed is not in its essence difficult to understand. A definite agreement exists between two friends. They agree as friends to interpret it in a particular manner. They cease to be friends as regards politics. They wish to interpret it in another manner; and they quote one another's friendly assurances as if they were an integral part of the agreement itself. Neither is legally bound; both are morally embarrassed. In the present case the complexity of the dispute was aggravated by all sorts of conflicting statements and promises made at different times by the local leaders. Into these it is not necessary to enter.

Lord Randolph Churchill's right to stand was, of course, incontestable. Compact or no compact, his claim upon the Liberal-Unionist vote was strong. He had polled 4,216 Conservative votes against Mr. Bright himself in that very constituency. He had only been defeated by 773. The Conservative organisation was unanimous in his favour. He was 'idolised' (this is the word that is used most frequently in contemporary accounts) by the rank and file. They outnumbered by three or four to one the

1889 Æт. 40 Liberal-Unionists in the division. Their votes had contributed four-fifths of the poll of all the Liberal-Unionist members in the city. Lord Randolph had himself been the principal agent by which the return of these gentlemen had been secured. On the day after the vacancy was declared the *Birmingham Daily Post*, the official Liberal-Unionist organ, published an article supporting his candidature and giving the Conservatives reason to believe that it would be accepted by both parties; nor did Mr. Chamberlain himself deny that if Lord Randolph came forward it would be his duty to support him. The only question was: Should he come forward?

No sooner was Mr. Bright dead than the Birmingham Conservatives appealed to Lord Randolph. All his friends and well-wishers pressed him to stand. Mr. Jennings was insistent. FitzGibbon urged him to 'chuck another big town' at the 'old gang.' 'It would be like the Paris elections to Boulanger,' said others. Colonel North, with the blunt decision of a business man, telegraphed to him from Santiago: 'Be sure contest Birmingham.' Faithful supporters offered to place their seats at his disposal in case of accidents. Lord Randolph does not seem to have anticipated any opposition from Mr. Chamberlain; yet it should have been sufficiently evident that Mr. Chamberlain's interests and inclinations were not likely to be served by the establishment of 'Two kings in Brentford.' So long as they were allies working in concert, it might be—perhaps it must be—endured. Now that they were separated and pursuing independent, and even divergent, courses the idea was intolerable. No difficulty or dispute was, however, apprehended. On April 2, when the writ was moved, Lord Randolph Churchill had every reason to suppose that complete unanimity prevailed. A deputation of Birmingham Tories waited on him at the House of Commons on that day with a hearty invitation. It seemed that his election was secured, and that a giant majority was certain.

And here I leave the account to Mr. Jennings:—

Mr. Jennings's Account of the Birmingham Affair.

Tuesday, April 2, 1889.

On my going to the House I met R. C. in the lobby. He drew me aside, and whispered that the deputation would be here presently. Would I meet them in the outer lobby, bring them inside, and talk to them till he came back? He was just going to see Hicks-Beach a few moments. He was turning away, but came back and said: 'May I ask you to do me another favour? Go and draw up a draft farewell address to the electors of South Paddington and an address to the electors of Birmingham.' 'When do you want them?' 'This afternoon,' he said. After a few more words he went away.

I made arrangements with Mr. Mattinson (M.P. for a Liverpool division) to meet the deputation while I went into the library to write out the addresses. I had finished the one for South Paddington and was half-way through the other when Mattinson came to me and told me the deputation were outside. I went to them, and had a little chat. They were radiant, having no reason whatever to anticipate a refusal. Mr. Rowlands told me R. C. was sure of a majority of between 2,000 and 3,000. After a talk I went

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back to finish the address, but met E. Beckett in one of the corridors. He said: 'Have you heard what he has done?' 'No.' 'He has left it to Hartington and Chamberlain to decide what he will do.' I was completely bewildered, and went into the smoking-room to look for R. C. Directly he saw me he came up and led me out into the corridor. There we walked up and down a long time, talking about it. He said he had been with Hicks-Beach, who was dead against his going to Birmingham. While they two were talking a knock came at the door and someone said Lord Hartington particularly wished to see Lord R. C. R. C. said: 'Let him come in here.' H. did so, and said Chamberlain was 'furious' at the idea of R. C. going to Birmingham—that he was 'in a state of extreme irritability.' Would they (Beach and Churchill) mind having Chamberlain in to hear what he had to say? Churchill said no, but he would go away for half an hour and leave them to discuss the matter. He would abide by their decision.

When he told me this I said: 'Surely you must know what their decision will be? Why, they would not want half a minute to decide that you shall not go. Chamberlain is "Boss" in Birmingham and he means to remain so. He does not want you there, dividing his popularity with him or, most likely, taking the lion's share of it.' And so on.

R. C. did not seem to think it so certain that they would decide against him and said, moreover, that he could not take the responsibility of dividing the Unionist party. After a time he said he would go back and hear their decision. In the meanwhile Akers-Douglas had carried off the Birmingham deputation to his own room.

I should think about a quarter of an hour elapsed, when R. C. reappeared in the lobby, from the House, and made for the outer door. He saw me and said: 'Where are the deputation—in the Conference Room?' I told him where they were. 'It is all over,' he said. 'I cannot stand for the seat. I'll tell you all about it by-and-by.'

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I would not go into the room, because I am not on terms with Akers-Douglas; but when a division-bell rang, and Akers-Douglas came out, I went in. The deputation were very incensed and loudly declared they had been cheated, and would go back and vote for the Gladstonian candidate. R. C. tried to smooth them down, but it was quite useless. . . .

The deputation were not alone in their disgust. Mr. Jennings was so vexed by what he conceived to be the weak and capricious abandonment of a cherished plan that for several days he could hardly bring himself to discuss it with Lord Randolph. His other friends were puzzled and discouraged. They ridiculed the impartiality of the committee of three. Chamberlain was an interested party, with a perfectly open and declared wish to prevent Lord Randolph standing. Hartington as leader of the Liberal Unionists could not act against the interests of his own followers. Beach, though a staunch friend, was a member of the Government. No wonder they had been able to come so promptly to a decision. To Lord Randolph himself the result was a cruel disappointment. He was isolated. He had few loyal followers and many powerful enemies. He could ill afford to surrender such advantages as he possessed. The others were armed with all the resources of a vast confederacy. Of his little he gave freely. In their prosperity and power they accepted the sacrifice as a matter of course. Mr. Chamberlain, it is true, was careful to say publicly[1] that Lord Randolph's action was 'in loyal accord with the arrangements made with the Conservative

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[1] Letter to *Birmingham Daily Post*, April 18.

1889 leaders, including himself, in 1886,' and to emphasise
ÆT. 40 his 'honourable determination not to break the national compact of which he was a chief party in 1886.' But the *Times*, then in the closest agreement with the governing forces of the Conservative party, though admitting that Lord Randolph had acted 'with thorough loyalty to the great cause that unites us all,' permitted itself (April 6) to observe that 'if the Birmingham Conservatives had any right to be aggrieved at the loss of their pet candidate it was to him, and to no one else, that they ought to address their complaints.'

The dispute was continued passionately at Birmingham. Mr. John Albert Bright was duly brought forward as the Liberal-Unionist candidate for the Central Division. The Conservative leaders there —Rowlands, Sawyer, Satchell-Hopkins, Moore Bayley—utterly refused to support him. They were local men, and against them were arrayed the whole authority of their party chiefs and the force and influence of a great national politician. But they had fought hard battles before, and although they thought themselves deserted by Lord Randolph Churchill they faced the situation with obstinacy. They declared that the Liberal-Unionists had broken faith with them and that Mr. Chamberlain had intrigued and used unfair pressure to prevent Lord Randolph from standing. Their determination not to support Mr. J. A. Bright was endorsed by their followers. For several days it seemed as if the Gladstonian candidate, Mr. Phipson Beale, would carry the seat.

So critical was the position that Mr. Balfour was hurried down to restore peace. A crowded meeting was held, at which Mr. Rowlands was bold enough to say that the Birmingham Conservatives were not prepared to bow down to anything that might be settled in London, and the more vigorous members of the Midland Conservative Club shouted 'No surrender.' Mr. Balfour was at his best. He dwelt upon Lord Randolph's refusal to stand—'he had absolutely declined to do so.' There was almost a suggestion that the speaker doubted the wisdom of that decision—but there it was! He then asserted the unimpeachable right of the local Conservatives to choose their own candidate. He deprecated strongly the interference of London politicians in local matters. But he urged them, in the free exercise of their discretion, utterly uninfluenced by such interference, to oppose the return of a Gladstonian. He carried the meeting with him. The local leaders were divided. Some acquiesced; some stood aside for a time. The part Mr. Rowlands had played had been too bold and prominent for retreat or pardon. Birmingham politics are bitter. Notwithstanding that every Conservative organisation in the city passed resolutions urging him to retain his leadership, he resigned his offices and withdrew altogether from public life. He should be remembered for having carried out the arrangement of 1886, whereby the Conservatives gave their full support to the Radical Unionists, 'asking for no return, making no boast or taunt,' on which arrangement

1889 Mr. Chamberlain's second empire in Birmingham Æt. 40 was ultimately established; and also for his firmness and courage amid peculiar and uncertain circumstances. Mr. John Albert Bright was elected by a large majority, practically the whole Conservative party having voted in his support.

Mr. Chamberlain and his friends, like practical people, said nothing until the election was over and their candidate was returned. Then he addressed a letter to the Birmingham papers challenging the local Conservatives to make good their charges of bad faith and intrigue. 'I am perfectly ready,' he wrote, 'to accept full responsibility for the advice which, in common with Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Lord Hartington, was tendered to Lord Randolph Churchill when he asked our opinions. I had no right and no wish to conceal my view that Lord Randolph Churchill's candidature might possibly be unsuccessful, and would certainly be regarded with disfavour by Liberal-Unionists in all parts of the country, as taking from the party one of the comparatively few seats held by them in 1886. While, however, I maintained this opinion, I expressed my readiness to do all in my power to promote his return if he should finally decide to come forward.' To the challenge to produce proofs of a broken compact the Conservatives replied with vigour and volubility. A whole page of the *Birmingham Gazette* was occupied with their statements, which appear to have been both explicit and complete. But as the dispute turned largely on the exact terms of the 'understanding,' whether those terms constituted a 'compact,' and how far this compact, if it existed, was modified by a general compact relating to Liberal-Unionist seats throughout the country, and as both parties relied mainly on their recollection of conversations which had taken place at intervals during the preceding year, no definite issue could be reached. But the Birmingham Conservatives were provoked anew by the triumphant resolution passed by the Liberal-Unionists affirming that the recent election had proved their 'preponderance of power' in the Central Division, and the quarrel was protracted with the rancour of civil war and the amenities of political discussion in Birmingham.

These proceedings, which were reported very fully throughout the country, forced Lord Randolph Churchill to publish on April 23 a detailed statement in the form of a letter to Mr. Chamberlain. After dealing at length with the questions of the compact he continued :—

> My going to Birmingham as candidate or not going always practically rested with you, as you perfectly well know, and you decided, no doubt on public grounds alone, that I was not to go. Now you have had your way, you have seated your nominee. I may claim to have assisted you materially, not only by yielding to your desire that I should refuse the request of the Birmingham Conservatives, but also by counsel, oral and written, as Mr. Rowlands and others can testify, to my friends in Birmingham to support Mr. John Albert Bright. If ever a man was compelled by duty to be magnanimous, or could afford to be magnanimous, it was yourself after such a conspicuous success. Your position demanded that you should neglect to notice

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any words which legitimate disappointment may have prompted, that you should do your best to soothe irritated but just susceptibilities, that you should suggest arrangements by which, in future electoral contests, the two sections of the Unionist party might work together cordially for their mutual advantage.

How widely different, however, has been your action! How curious the return you make to the Conservatives who voted in such large numbers for Mr. Bright, and to me, who thought I was your friend, and who certainly—to put the matter in the most negative and colourless manner—did nothing to interfere with Mr. Bright's return.

As far as I am concerned, you endeavour to embroil me and my friends in Birmingham by representing, and by seeking to make it appear, that I have played fast and loose with them, although in dealing with the incident I have regarded your interests a great deal more than my own; and in respect of the Conservative party in Birmingham they are rewarded by an acrimonious attack from you and their leaders, by contumely and denunciation being poured upon men to whom they owe much and whose services they highly value; and, finally, in order that insult may be heaped upon injury, you allow the Liberal Unionist Association, which is completely under your control, at a meeting over which you presided, to set forth in a formal and written resolution an assertion so questionable as to be almost ridiculous, to the effect that the recent election has shown 'that the preponderance of political power in Central Birmingham is with the Liberal-Unionist party.'

I have entered into this controversy with you with much reluctance and have in no way sought it; but I owe too much to the Conservatives in Birmingham not to take up pen in their behalf when, as it appears to me, they are treated with unqualified injustice.

There the matter ends so far as this account is concerned; for it is not necessary to follow the long and vexatious discussions by which, after years had passed, the representation of the Edgbaston Division in lieu of the Central Division was ultimately conceded to the Conservative party. Lord Randolph's decision has been exposed to various criticisms, but the explanation is not obscure. He looked back with pride to the great compact of 1886. He could not bear to take action which would be misrepresented as hostile to the fundamental basis of the Unionist alliance; and he knew well that the forces for influencing public opinion against him were strong enough, whatever the actual rights and wrongs of the Birmingham dispute, to create that impression. This reasoning may have been sufficient; but it does not cover the fact of his submitting his claims to the arbitrament of such a committee. Whatever the circumstances, he himself should have decided. The responsibility was his alone; and although it might be prudent to receive the counsels of Lord Hartington and of Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and to hear Mr. Chamberlain's opinion, he should have informed them, and not they him, of the decision that was finally taken.

It should be said that Lord Randolph Churchill never considered that Mr. Chamberlain had treated him with any want of candour in this affair. He did not think he had been generous in action or in victory. But he recognised that a natural divergence had opened between them and this, although acute, was confined to political and public limits and did not extend to personal relations. To the

1889 Æt. 40 end of his life he was accustomed to say that their only quarrel was over the Aston Riots; and they met, though less frequently, on courteous terms. The blow was a bitter one to Lord Randolph. His enforced desertion of his Birmingham friends cut him to the quick. As he came out of the Whips' room, where he had given his answer to the deputation, a friend noticed upon his face the shadow of that drawn and ghastly look with which it was in a few years to be stamped.

So considerable an interval elapsed after the Suakin debates before Lord Randolph Churchill again addressed the House of Commons that he provoked a laugh by drolly asking 'the indulgence usually accorded to a new member.' The session of 1889 had almost reached its close without the question of making the necessary provision by Parliamentary grant for the children of the Prince of Wales having been debated. When he rose (July 26), in succession to Mr. Bradlaugh, from his accustomed seat immediately behind the Treasury Bench, the Conservative members seemed in some doubt as to his intention, and he was greeted by only a very faint cheer. But his first words made his position manifest: 'I have always held an opinion, amounting to absolute conviction, as to the indisputable right of the Crown to apply to Parliament to make provision for the Royal Family and to rely upon the liberality of Parliament in respect of such applications.' Then followed one of the most happy speeches he ever achieved. The argument, which was elaborate and precise, was concerned largely with figures and precedents showing the small cost of the British Monarchy compared with other forms of Government, and the conduct of the reigning Sovereign with respect to claims upon Parliament in comparison with some of her later predecessors. The constitutional doctrine involved and the mode of presenting such a case to a popular assembly are worthy of the attention of politicians; but the whole was enlivened and adorned by a sustained sparkle of what in those days had come to be called 'Randolphian humour,' which kept the rapidly assembled House in continued laughter and applause. When, for instance, he referred to Mr. Mundella as having 'addressed his constituents in Paradise—Square,' with just the slightest pause after 'Paradise,' the whole House collapsed; and Mr. Gladstone, whose sense of humour was somewhat uneven, is said to have laughed more than at any other jest he had ever heard in Parliament.

The effect of this speech, which occupied more than an hour, was to produce for the moment a complete reconciliation between Lord Randolph and his party. All about him as he sat down was a stir of enthusiasm. The Treasury Bench turned a row of delighted faces towards him. Among his papers I find a bundle of letters, full of gratitude and praise, written from the House by Conservative members while the impression was strong in their minds. But Lord Randolph Churchill knew he had that to say two days later in the Midlands which would speedily dissipate such transient and uncourted approbation.

On successive evenings at Walsall and Birmingham

1889 — ÆT. 40 he outlined an extensive, yet not unpractical, programme of domestic legislation, dealing especially with land and housing, and with temperance. A single extract will show how far his mind had travelled from those serene pastures where the Government lambs were nourished:—

> . . . The great obstacle to temperance reform undoubtedly is the wholesale manufacturers of alcoholic drink. Those manufacturers are small in number, but they are very wealthy. They exercise enormous influence. Every publican in the country almost, certainly nine-tenths of the publicans in the country, are their abject and tied slaves. Public-houses in nine cases out of ten are tied houses. There is absolutely no free-will, and these wholesale manufacturers of alcoholic drink have an enormously powerful political organisation, so powerful and so highly prepared that it is almost like a Prussian army: it can be mobilised at any moment and brought to bear on the point which is threatened. Up to now this great class has successfully intimidated a Government and successfully intimidated members of Parliament; in fact, they have directly overthrown two Governments, and I do not wonder, I do not blame Governments for being a little timid of meddling with them. But, in view of the awful misery which does arise from the practically unlimited and uncontrolled sale of alcoholic drinks in this country, I tell you my frank opinion—the time has already arrived when we must try our strength with that party. . . . Do imagine what a prodigious social reform, what a bound in advance we should have made if we could curb and control this destructive and devilish liquor traffic, if we could manage to remove from amongst us what I have called on former occasions the fatal facility of recourse to the beerhouse which besets every man and woman, and really one may almost say every child, of the working classes in England.

The next day he spoke at Birmingham. Ireland was his principal theme. For the first time on this subject since he resigned he unburdened his mind without restraint. He showed how much he hated the harsh and ill-tempered opinions then so powerful. He advocated two great measures by which the Conservative party might with wisdom and propriety assuage the bitter discontent of the Irish people—Local Government and land purchase. He even named the sum of money for which the credit of the United Kingdom might be pledged to create a peasant proprietary. 'Something like one hundred millions,' he said; and the audience gasped suspiciously. What folly to think the Conservative party would touch such measures! And yet they have passed them into law!

Surely the reader will linger on the wit and wisdom of this concluding passage, remembering always how great a price in influence and personal fortunes the speaker willingly paid for the privilege of telling the truth:—

> I dare say many of us have read, and a great many of you remember, a charming novel of Mr. Dickens, 'Our Mutual Friend'; and it may be in your recollection that there was a certain character in that novel of great interest, the delineation of which, by Mr. Dickens, is a subject of great amusement to the reader. His name was Mr. Podsnap; and, if you recollect, Mr. Podsnap was a person in easy circumstances, who was very content with himself and was extremely surprised that all the world was not equally contented like him; and if anyone suggested to Mr. Podsnap that there were possible causes of discontent among the

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people Mr. Podsnap was very much annoyed. He declared that the person making such a suggestion was flying in the face of Providence. He declared that the subject was an unpleasant one; he would go so far as to say it was an odious one; and he refused to consider it, he refused to admit it, and with a wave of his arm, you recollect, he used to sweep it away and to remove it off the face of the earth.

It would be a great mistake to suppose that Mr. Podsnap is a character of fiction. I know him well. I often meet Mr. Podsnap in London society. Mr. Podsnap hates me; he looks upon me as a person of most immoral and most evil tendency; but, with that morbid love of contemplating and prying into things essentially evil which is possessed, I think, by a great many good men, Mr. Podsnap cannot restrain himself sometimes from conversing with me, and this is the sort of remark Mr. Podsnap makes when he accosts me. He says, 'Young man'—he always begins in that way, though I believe he is not very much older than myself—he says, 'Are you not more and more impressed day by day with the constant proof and illustration of the hopeless and hereditary wickedness of the Irish people?' I say 'No;' that I have had some experience of the Irish people, and I have lived amongst them for some years, and that I have always found them a very pleasant people and a very amiable people, and very easy to get on with if you take them the right way. And then Mr. Podsnap is painfully annoyed; he shows his indignation, he declares that the subject is an unpleasant one, and he will go so far as to say an odious one. He refuses to admit it, he refuses to consider it, and he removes it and sweeps it away from off the face of the earth. Well, sometimes I like, when I have nothing better to do, to try and draw Mr. Podsnap, and I go up to him and I ask him whether he does not think on the whole it might be a good thing after balancing everything—if we could find some dodge which might keep the Irish members out of prison. And then Mr. Podsnap is startled, and he is much annoyed, and he says, 'Do you mean seriously to argue that the Irish members, if they had their deserts, ought not to be hanged, drawn and quartered in front of Westminster Hall?' Then I reply that no doubt that is one way of dealing with the Irish members and one way of governing Ireland, but that it appears to me a somewhat singular way of maintaining the Parliamentary union between two countries; and then Mr. Podsnap is very wroth, and he sweeps me away and he removes me and the Irish members and Ireland from off the face of the earth. But Mr. Podsnap is not a bad fellow on the whole, so long as you do not pay the smallest attention to him. But undoubtedly, at the present moment, what Mr. Dickens calls Podsnappery is rampant and rife in London, and I think this Podsnappery we ought to make a great effort to put down.

I am certain that intolerance and contempt of Irish opinion and prejudice, hopeless prejudice against Irish ideas, produce a corresponding rancour and hatred among the Irish people against us, and terribly envenom the feelings and the relations between the two countries. No, let us rather have recourse, and confident recourse, to justice, to liberality, to generosity and, above all, to sympathy in our Irish policy. You may be certain of this, that a free manifestation of those qualities in your Irish policy would work such a miracle in Ireland as you have no conception of. I hope most earnestly that I shall never live to see the day when there may be established in Ireland a separate Parliament and a separate Government; but I hope equally earnestly and equally strongly, that I may live to see the day, and that possibly it may be in my power somewhat to contribute to the advent of that time, and that that time may not be at any very distant or remote date, when the Irish shall not only be prosperous, but free—free in the full and proper sense of the word—free as the English, as the Scotch, and as the Welsh are free; and when a strong conviction of the benefits and a strong affection for the ties of union with Great Britain shall pervade and fill Irish hearts and minds, when the recollections

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of the former strife of nations shall be all forgotten, and when our children shall wonderingly inquire of us how it was that through so many weary years Ireland was a source of danger and of distress to the British Empire.

These two speeches in the Midlands, especially the first, at Walsall, were a terrible rock of offence. The landlords, the brewers and the opponents of land purchase were incensed and alarmed. 'They are all up in arms against you,' wrote Jennings sadly from the House of Commons. 'The speech on the Royal Grants did you so much good with the party, and now . . . . the Conservatives say you are nothing better than a Socialist, and the Radicals are, for a wonder, equally hostile. They are all agreed in denouncing you. The wind is due east, I must admit, and very keen and biting.'

'I am sorry to have to tell you,' wrote a Conservative member who had been pressing Lord Randolph to visit his constituency, 'that the local Fathers in * * * think that in the interests of the party it would be undesirable to hold a meeting there, and that you would not meet with a good reception from our own people. All of them expressed the opinion that they could not afford to offend the brewers and publicans, who have done so much for us in the past, and that any scheme proposing a loan of money to Ireland to buy out Irish landlords was most unpopular and regarded as Gladstonianism pure and simple.'

In Birmingham especially a bad impression was created, and Lord Randolph's influence, already terribly injured by his refusal to stand, was further weakened. It need scarcely be said that Mr. Chamberlain was much shocked by the open profession of doctrines so advanced in constituencies which bordered on his own, and on the first convenient occasion he felt it his duty to administer a suitable rebuke:— 1889 ÆT. 40

> I observed the other day [he said] that a most distinguished nobleman, Lord Randolph Churchill, addressed various speeches to audiences in Birmingham and the neighbourhood, and that he declared himself to be a Tory. I can only say his programme is a programme which, I am perfectly certain, will be absolutely repudiated by Lord Salisbury and Mr. Balfour. I dare say you have often seen at a bazaar or elsewhere a patchwork quilt brought out for sale, which is made up of scraps from old dresses and from left-off garments which the maker has been able to borrow for the purpose. I am told that in America they call a thing of this kind a 'crazy quilt.' I think that the fancy programme which Lord Randolph Churchill put before you the other day may well be described as a 'crazy quilt.' He borrowed from the cast-off policy of all the extreme men of all the different sections. He took his Socialism from Mr. Burns and Mr. Hyndman; he took his Local Option from Sir Wilfrid Lawson; he took his Egyptian policy from Mr. Illingworth; he took his metropolitan reform from Mr. Stuart; and he took his Irish policy from Mr. John Morley. Is this Toryism?

All this was especially edifying, pronounced as it was within four years of the 'Unauthorised Programme.' But Lord Randolph was not, as some who wrote to him seemed to suppose, trying to ingratiate himself with the House of Commons Tories, or seeking to win re-entry to the Cabinet. 'I decline,' he said sardonically, 'to enter into competition with Mr. Chamberlain for the smiles of

1889
ÆT. 40

Hatfield.' He understood perfectly what reception the ruling class in the Conservative party would accord to his democratic ideas. The worthy Conservative gentlemen who had pressed their congratulations upon him after his speech on the Royal Grants could hardly restrain their indignation now. Finding themselves at one time in complete agreement with him, and at another in vehement dissent, they assumed, not unnaturally, that he was unbalanced and insincere. Yet these speeches, variously greeted as they were, arose from the same logical and coherent system of political thought to which, rightly or wrongly, he had always adhered through good and evil fortune. The principal speeches which he made in 1889 almost covered, and were designed to cover, the whole field of 'Tory Democracy.' In justifying the Royal Grants he had affirmed that loyalty to the Crown which every true Tory-Democrat must be prepared to practise and sustain. At Walsall and Birmingham he urged that energetic sympathy with practical social reform and indifference to selfish class instincts which alone can convince democracy that time-honoured institutions are not merely safeguards but may be made effective instruments of progress. In Wales during the autumn he championed the Established Church. In Scotland later in the year he defended the Union. Something was, however, still wanting to complete his political faith. It remained to assert the sanctity of those constitutional barriers by which liberty and justice are secured. That omission the near future was to repair.

CHAPTER XXI

THE PARNELL COMMISSION

> "Iam non ad culmina rerum
> Injustos crevisse queror: tolluntur in altum
> Ut lapsu graviore ruant."
>
> CLAUDIAN.

It is no part of my task to examine the proceedings of the Special Commission, nor to supply a narrative of that long-drawn and embittered controversy known as 'Parnellism and Crime.' Those are matters of history, and even such allusion to their course and character as might have been required for the coherency of this story seems unnecessary in view of an account recently given to the world by Mr. Morley,[1] combining the vivid and picturesque character which only an eye-witness can command, with that brevity in regard to general questions indispensable to biography. I am concerned only to pick out Lord Randolph Churchill's part and to trace the steps which led him to an utter breach with the Government and quarrel with the Conservative party; and this can be done mainly in his own words. 1887 ÆT. 38

The letter involving Mr. Parnell in complicity with the Phœnix Park murders was printed in facsimile

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[1] *Life of Gladstone*, Book X., chapter iii.

1887 ÆT. 38 in the *Times* of April 18, 1887, and was doubtless intended to be a spur to the Unionist party on the day of the introduction of the Coercion Bill. That same night Mr. Parnell declared it to be a forgery. His denial was received with incredulity by the Ministerialists and he was at once asked why he did not take action for libel. His reasons for not doing so were apparently that he and his advisers had no confidence that their case would be considered without prejudice by a Middlesex jury, and that if a favourable verdict were obtained in Ireland similar English suspicions would deprive it of moral effect. No action being taken by Mr. Parnell, a motion was made by a private member for a Select Committee of Inquiry. This was debated on May 5, and the Select Committee was refused by the Government. Lord Randolph, who on this occasion, as on various other questions of privilege, was consulted by Mr. Smith, supported the Government decision, and warmly defended the Leader of the House from attacks which were made upon him. Although the murder charges against Mr. Parnell were repeated in various forms at partisan meetings, and even received countenance from several of the Conservative Ministers, the whole matter lapsed so far as Parliament was concerned, and would never have been resuscitated but for the perversity of chance.

An action for libel against the *Times* was instituted in November 1887 by an Irishman who had sat in the late Parliament as a follower of Mr. Parnell and who felt himself damaged by the various allegations contained in the series of letters headed 'Parnellism and Crime.' This suit was tried before Lord Coleridge in July 1888. The *Times* happened to be defended by Sir Richard Webster, the principal law officer of the Crown—acting, however, as he explained, to his own satisfaction, purely professionally and not as a member of the Government. In the course of the trial the Attorney-General repeated during three days the general charges and allegations of the *Times* articles, and produced a further batch of incriminating letters alleged to be signed by the Irish leader. On this the Parliamentary case was reopened, and Parnell himself demanded a Select Committee of Inquiry. The Government, as before, refused the Committee, but—to general astonishment—they now proceeded to offer, and finally to insist upon, a Commission of three judges with statutory power to inquire not merely into the specific matter of the letters, but rovingly into the whole of the charges and allegations of the *Times*, whether against members of Parliament or 'other persons.' The necessary Bill was introduced on July 16.

Lord Randolph Churchill was dismayed by this unexpected departure. He felt it his duty to protest from the very beginning against such procedure. Yet he did not wish to embarrass the Government or to hamper them in their Irish policy. Instead of speaking in the debates upon the Bill, he drew up on the day of its introduction a memorandum which he sent to Mr. Smith, and which is at once a convenient narrative of the case and perhaps the most powerful

1888 ÆT. 39 statement he ever penned. If it were necessary to base his reputation for political wisdom upon a single document, I should select this :—

Memorandum.

It may be assumed that the Tory party are under an imperative obligation to avoid seeking escape from political difficulties by extra-constitutional methods. The above is a general rule. The exception to it can scarcely be conceived.

The case of 'Parnellism and Crime' is essentially a political and Parliamentary difficulty of a minor kind. A newspaper has made against a group of members of the House of Commons accusations of complicity in assassination, crime and outrage. In the commencement the parties accused do not feel themselves specially aggrieved. They take no action ; the Government responsible for the guidance of the House of Commons does not feel called upon to act in the matter. A member of Parliament, acting on his own responsibility, brings the matter before the House of Commons as a matter of privilege and a Select Committee is moved for to inquire into the allegations.

The Government take up an unexceptionable and perfectly constitutional position. They refuse the Select Committee on the ground marked out by Sir Erskine May, that matters which may or ought to come within the cognisance of the Courts of Law are not fit for inquiry by Select Committee.

The Government press upon the accused parties their duty, should they feel themselves aggrieved, to proceed against the newspaper legally and, with a generosity hardly open to condemnation, offer to make the prosecution of the newspaper, so far as expense is concerned, a Government prosecution. The offer is not accepted, the view of duty is disagreed from by the accused persons, the motion for a Select Committee is negatived and the matter drops, the balance of disadvantage remaining with the accused persons.

Owing to an abortive and obscurely originated action for libel, the whole matter revives. The original charges are reiterated in a court of law by the Attorney-General, but owing to the course of the suit no evidence is called to sustain the allegations. A fresh demand is made by the accused persons for a Select Committee and is refused by the Government on the same grounds as before and, as before, with a preponderating assent of public opinion. So far all is satisfactory, except to the accused parties and their sympathisers.

For reasons not known, the Government take a new departure of a most serious kind. They offer to constitute by statute a tribunal with exceptional powers, to be composed mainly of judges of the Supreme Court, to inquire into the truth of the allegations. To this course the following objections are obvious and unanswerable:

1. The offer, to a large extent, recognises the wisdom and justice of the conduct of the accused persons in avoiding recurrence to the ordinary tribunals.

2. It is absolutely without precedent. The Sheffield case, the Metropolitan Board of Works case, are by no means analogous. Into those two cases not a spark of political feeling entered. The case of 'Parnellism and Crime' in so far as it is not criminal is entirely political. In any event the political character of the case would predominate over the criminal.

3. It is submitted that it is in the highest degree unwise and, indeed, unlawful to take the judges of the land out of their proper sphere of duty, and to mix them up in political conflict. In this case, whichever way they decide, they will be the object of political criticism and animadversion. Whatever their decision, speaking roughly, half the country will applaud, the other half condemn, their action; their conduct during the trial in its minutest particulars, every ruling as to evidence, every chance expression, every question put by them, will be keenly watched, canvassed, criticised, censured or praised. Were judges in England ever placed

1888 — Æt. 39 in such a position before? Will any judge emerge from this inquiry the same for all judicial purposes, moral weight and influence as he went into it? Have you a right to expose your judges, and in all probability your best judges, to such an ordeal?

4. The tribunal will conduct its proceedings by methods different to a court of law. The examination will mainly be conducted by the tribunal itself; a witness cannot refuse to reply on the ground that the answer would criminate himself. Evidence in this way will be extracted which might be made the basis of a criminal prosecution against other persons. Indemnities might be given to persons actually guilty of very grave crime, and persons much less guilty of direct participation in grave crime might, under such protected evidence, be made liable to a prosecution.

The whole course of proceeding, if the character of the allegations is remembered, will, when carefully considered, be found to be utterly repugnant to our English ideas of legal justice, and wholly unconstitutional. It is hardly exaggerating to describe the Commission contemplated as 'a revolutionary tribunal' for the trial of political offenders. If there is any truth in the above or colour for such a statement, can a Tory Government safely or honourably suggest and carry through such a proposal?

I would suggest that the constitutional legality of this proposed tribunal be submitted to the judges for their opinion.

It is not for the Government, in matters of this kind, to initiate extra-constitutional proceedings and methods. One can imagine an excited Parliament or inflamed public opinion forcing such proceedings on a Government. In this case there is no such pressure. The first duty of a Government would be to resist being driven outside the lines of the Constitution. In no case, except when public safety is involved, can they be justified in taking the lead. They are the chief guardians of the Constitution. The Constitution is violated or strained in this country when action is taken for which there is no reasonably analogous precedent. Considerations of this kind ought to influence powerfully the present Government.

It is said that the honour of the House of Commons is concerned. This is an empty phrase. The tribunal, whatever its decision, will not prevent the Irish constituencies from returning as representatives the parties implicated. In such an event the honour of the House of Commons could only be vindicated by repeated expulsion, followed by disfranchisement. Does any reasonable person contemplate such a course?

The proceedings of the tribunal cannot be final. In the event of a decision to the effect that the charges are not established, proceedings for libel against the newspaper might be resorted to, the newspaper being placed under a most grossly unjust disadvantage. In the event of a decision to the contrary effect, a criminal prosecution would seem to be imperative. Regarded from the high ground of State policy in Ireland such a prosecution would probably be replete with danger and disaster.

These reflections have been sketched out concisely. If submitted to a statesman, or to anyone of great legal learning and attainments, many more and much graver reflections would probably be suggested.

I do not examine the party aspects of the matter; I only remark that the fate of the Union may be determined by the abnormal proceedings of an abnormal tribunal. Prudent politicians would hesitate to go out of their way to play such high stakes as these.—R. H. S. C.

July 17, 1888.

Nearly two years had passed since these words were written. During all that time Lord Randolph Churchill kept silence. The Government persevered in their courses. The Bill for the Special Commission was driven swiftly through the House of

1890 ÆT. 41 Commons by guillotine closure. The Judges slowly unravelled the vast tangle of evidence and ethics which had been thrust upon them. Not until the fiftieth sitting of the court was the letter reached which was the reason for the whole proceeding. Then there was an acceleration. In two days a wretched man was proved a forger. In five days he was dead. The only charge that gave birth to the Commission perished by the pistol-shot that destroyed Pigott. The other allegations, melancholy and voluminous as they were, useful as they may have been for political controversy, revealed only the bitterness of the national and racial struggle; and expressed in the language of the victorious party a condemnation of methods of political warfare, more or less lawless, certainly deplorable, but essentially characteristic of revolutionary movements, open or veiled.

The report of the Commission came before the House of Commons on March 3, 1890. In spite of every effort to broaden the issue and to escape from narrow and definite charges of murder, which had been disproved, to general charges of lawlessness and disloyalty which required no proof, the impression produced in the country was adverse to the Government. The party orator dilated on the heinous conduct of the Irish members. The plain man stopped short at Pigott. Ministers had stained the cause of the Union by unconstitutional action and had allowed others to stain it by felony. Lord Randolph's private letters reveal from time to time the abhorrence with which he regarded the whole transaction. The by-elections attested the opinion of the public. There was too much truth in Parnell's savage accusation:[1] 'You wanted to use this question of the forged letters as a political engine. You did not care whether they were forged or not. You saw that it was impossible for us under the circumstances, or for anybody under the circumstances, to prove that they were forgeries. It was a very good question for you to win elections with. . . . It was also a suitable engine to enable you to obtain an inquiry into a much wider field and very different matters, an inquiry which you never would have got apart from these infamous productions.'

The feeling that some reparation was due to men against whom a charge of complicity in murder had been falsely preferred and who had been pursued by such unwonted means, was by no means confined to the Opposition. But the Government were resolved to brazen it out; and the party machinery, local and national, held firm. The speech of the Conservative leader was grudging and unsympathetic; and Mr. Gladstone's condemnation and appeal rang through a responsive House. The debate on his amendment ebbed and flowed through four Parliamentary days, and from the division by which it was terminated fourteen Unionists, including Lord Randolph, abstained. Meanwhile, on March 7, Mr. Jennings—with the concurrence, as was generally known, of Lord Randolph Churchill—had given notice of the following amendment: 'And, further, this House deems it to be its duty to record its condemnation of the conduct of those who are responsible for the accusations of complicity in murder brought against members of this House, discovered to be based mainly on forged letters, and declared by the Special Commission to be false.' Such a notice, coming from the Unionist benches and believed to have the support of Lord Randolph Churchill, of course attracted general attention. He himself was, however, in the greatest perplexity. Party feeling ran high. It is when the attack is grave and damaging, when there is fullest justification for censure, when manifestly Ministers are wrong, that those who adhere to them through thick and thin, are most impatient of reproach. He knew well that by speaking he would greatly injure himself in the eyes of his party. And yet could he honourably keep silent? He regretted that he had encouraged Jennings to put his amendment down. He asked him to withdraw it. But Mr. Jennings refused. It was not until Mr. Gladstone's amendment had been disposed of on the fourth day of the discussion that he made up his mind to speak, when the House should meet at the next sitting (March 11). By custom, though not by rule, the Speaker would have called upon the movers of other amendments, once that stage of debate has begun. But Lord Randolph, after much consideration, decided that he had better say what he had to say upon the main question, neither interfering with, nor being limited by, Mr. Jennings's amendment or others that stood before it; and technically he was within his right, if the Speaker should call on him. 1890 Æt. 41

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[1] *Hansard*, March 1890.

He was heard by the House in a strained unusual silence, which seemed to react upon him ; for he spoke with strange slowness, deliberation and absence of passion—like a judge deciding on a point of law, and without any of the lightness and humour of old Opposition days. He examined the question frigidly and with severity—how the Government had discarded the ordinary tribunals of the land ; how they had instituted a special tribunal wherein the functions of judge and jury were cumulated upon three individuals ; how the persons implicated had had no voice in the constitution of that tribunal; how they were in part the political opponents of the Government of the day; and how one result had been to levy upon both parties to the action a heavy pecuniary fine. All these things were described in the same even, passionless voice, and heard by the House with undiminished attention and by the Ministerial supporters with growing resentment. Presently came a pause. He asked those about him for a glass of water. Not a man moved. Fancying he had not been heard, he asked again : and so bitter was party passion that even this small courtesy was refused. At length, seeing how the matter stood, Mr. Baumann, a young Conservative member from below the Gangway, went out for some. As he returned, the Irish—always so quick to perceive a small personal incident—greeted him with a half-sympathetic, half-ironical cheer, and Lord Randolph, taking the glass

1890 from his hand, said solemnly and elaborately in a

ÆT. 41 penetrating undertone: 'I hope this will not compromise you with your party.'

At length he began to speak louder. 'The procedure which we are called upon to stamp with our approval to-night is a procedure which would undoubtedly have been gladly resorted to by the Tudors and their judges. It is procedure of an arbitrary and tyrannical character, used against individuals who are political opponents of the Government of the day—procedure such as Parliament has for generations and centuries struggled against and resisted—procedure such as we had hoped, in these happy days, Parliament had triumphantly overcome. It is procedure such as would have startled even Lord Eldon; it is procedure such as Lords Lyndhurst and Brougham would have protested against; it is procedure which, if that great lawyer Earl Cairns had been alive, the Tory party would never have carried. But a Nemesis awaits a Government that adopts unconstitutional methods. What,' he asked, 'has been the result of this uprootal of constitutional practice? What has been the one result?' Then in a fierce whisper, hissing through the House, 'Pigott!'—then in an outburst of uncontrollable passion and disgust —'a man, a thing, a reptile, a monster—Pigott!'—and then again, with a phrase at which the House shuddered,[1] 'Pigott! Pigott! Pigott!'

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[1] See Appendix, Mr. Jennings's Memorandum and Lord Justice FitzGibbon's note thereupon.

Let us return to Hansard. 'Why do I bring these things before the House? [*An honourable member laughed derisively.*] Ah! yes; I know there are lots of high-minded and generous members, who not long ago were my friends, who are ready to impute—and much more likely to impute than openly assert—that I am animated by every evil motive. I bring these matters before the House of Commons because I apprehend the time—which I trust may be remote, but which I sometimes fear may be nigh—when the party which vaunts itself as the constitutional party may, by the vicissitudes of fortune, find itself in a position of inferiority similar to that which it occupied in 1832—when the rights of the minority may be trampled upon and overridden, when the views of the minority may be stifled, and when individual political opponents may be proceeded against as you have proceeded against your political opponents.'

He then explained how that these were no new views of his, that they had not been formed in consequence of the results of the trial—'as those who are always ready to form a most unfavourable opinion of me have said'—but that two years before, when the Bill for the Special Commission was before Parliament, he had embodied them in a document which he had 'respectfully laid before the First Lord of the Treasury.' 'There was a time,' he said at the end, 'not very long ago, when my words had some weight with honourable gentlemen on this side of the House; and in recalling that time I will add—I cannot refrain from the remark—that the prospects of the party were brighter than they are now. When I had the honour, the memorable honour, of counselling them, the Unionist majority was more than a hundred. It has now fallen to about seventy. If there are any lingering memories on these benches of those days—when, I think, our fortunes were better—it is by those memories I would appeal to the Conservative party to give a fair and impartial and unprejudiced consideration to the counsels which I now lay before them. But if my words are to fall on deaf ears—if the counsels I most honestly submit are to be spurned and scorned, then I declare that I look forward to the day when a future Parliament shall expunge from the Journals of this House the record of this melancholy proceeding; and in taking such action—inspired, I trust, not by party passion, party vindictiveness or party rancour, but acting on constitutional grounds, and on those alone—it will administer to its predecessor a deserved and wholesome rebuke for having outraged and violated constitutional liberty and will establish a signpost full of warning and guidance to Parliaments yet unborn.'

He sat down very much exhausted—for his health was already weakening—by the strain to which he had been put. He had never spoken with more consciousness of right, never with less regard to his own interests and scarcely ever with greater effect. Deep down in the heart of the old-fashioned Tory, however unreflecting, there lurks a wholesome respect for the ancient forms and safeguards of the English Constitution and a recognition of the fact that some day they may be found of great consequence and use. Moreover, the case was black and overwhelming. But a formidable champion was at hand to succour and shield the Ministry; and it was Chamberlain who rose from the Front Opposition Bench to reply on behalf of the Government. His speech was couched in a friendly and respectful tone—not unmindful, perhaps, of an old compact as to the asperities of political warfare—but in every part it made clear the breach which now existed between these former allies, and the bonds which were steadily strengthening between this Radical leader and his Conservative friends. 1890 ÆT. 41

To all this Mr. Jennings had listened with impatience and resentment. His amendment had not, it seemed, been merely deserted by Lord Randolph Churchill; it had been compromised. The opportunity for moving it was irretrievably spoiled. The consequence that had attached to it, was gone. The crowded house was melting. No man about to address a critical assembly on a matter which he considers important, resolved to do his very best by his argument and braced against the expected disapprobation of his own friends, can be free from nervous tension; and the better the speaker, the greater the strain. At such a moment small things do not always appear small and grave decisions are not always taken on serious grounds. Mr. Jennings had been several times disappointed in Lord Randolph. He had failed to carry him forward into a Fair Trade campaign. He had been bitterly discouraged by the

Birmingham surrender. He had watched with mortification the decline of Lord Randolph's popularity. He had disapproved of the Radicalism of the later speeches. And now, on the top of all the rest, came this sharp collision. He took it as an act of mortal treachery and insult. In that flood of anger the comradeship of four stormy years was swept away as if it had been a feather. While Mr. Chamberlain was replying he leaned over the bench and told Lord Randolph shortly that after such a speech he would not move his amendment, and would tell the House why. Lord Randolph, who had been absorbed by his own struggle, was amazed at his fierce manner, and realised for the first time that he had caused deep offence. He wished at once to put it right. But Jennings would not answer. He had made up his mind. Two pencil notes, written on slips torn from the order paper, were put into his hands. He read them, folded them, put them carefully away, and they have drifted here, like the wreckage tossed up on the shore long after a ship has foundered. 'I hope you will reflect before making any public attack upon me. It would be a thousand pities to set all the malicious tongues wagging, when later you will understand what my position was.' And again—probably after Jennings had spoken—'How can you so wilfully misunderstand my action and so foolishly give way to temper in dealing with grave political matters?'

As soon as Mr. Chamberlain had finished, Mr. Jennings rose, and struck as hard as he could. 'He had not been prepared for the tone and manner of the speech of his noble friend.' The delivery of a speech 'so hostile to the Government' had considerably embarrassed him. 'It is said,' he proceeded in his cold, measured way, 'that I derive my opinions from my noble friend, but occasionally, and at intervals, I am capable of forming opinions of my own, and such an interval has occurred now.' 'The noble lord has a genius for surprises: sometimes he surprises his opponents; sometimes he takes his best friends unawares.' Finally, he declined to move his amendment, as a means of dissociating himself from any attempt 'to stab his party in the back.' During this speech the occupants of the Treasury Bench took, as may be imagined, no pains to conceal their satisfaction. In a very brief personal explanation Lord Randolph Churchill declared that his own speech had been made without reference to any of the amendments on the paper, solely because it was pertinent to the main question rather than to any amendment. Mr. Caine, who was then on the verge of returning to the Liberal party, moved the dropped amendment without comment. Almost alone among Conservative members, Lord Randolph supported it, as he had promised and always intended, in the division lobby, and it was rejected by a majority of sixty-two.

The outcry raised against Lord Randolph Churchill for his speech and vote was immediate and astonishing. The entire Conservative press denounced him as a traitor, and he was deluged with

1890 Æt. 41 abuse. The *Standard* declared that he had no further right to be regarded as a member of the Unionist party. 'The utter failure of his career points a moral of peculiar significance. Seldom has it been possible to give a more convincing proof of the fact that the man who is ready to sacrifice principle to personal ambition will not only lose the esteem of the worthiest among his fellow-countrymen, but will even fail in the object to which he is willing to surrender his convictions.' But more important even than such pronouncements was the feeling in the country. The meeting which he was to have addressed at Colchester was cancelled 'owing to the illness of Lord Brooke.' The Chairman of his Association in Paddington resigned; the various clubs in the borough passed strong resolutions in condemnation of their member, and a meeting of the Council was convened for the 17th to consider his conduct. Opinion in Birmingham was very hostile. Even the Midland Conservative Club met together to pass a vote of censure.

Lord Randolph Churchill met these manifestations with composure not unmingled with scorn. To the resolution of the Paddington Council he replied in a letter described by the much-shocked *Times* as 'characteristically pert and saucy,' and dated from the Jockey Club Rooms at Newmarket. 'I have no reason to suppose,' he wrote, 'that the Council are in error in committing themselves to the opinion that my action is "entirely out of harmony" with the views of the Conservative electors of the division; but I remark with satisfaction that the Council, with a prudence which I cannot too highly or respectfully commend, have abstained from expressing any opinion as to whether my action was right or wrong.' If they wished him to take the opinion of the electors on the question they knew the steps which were necessary, but meanwhile he reminded them that the Council was not the Association and still less the constituency of South Paddington.

On the same morning of this meeting in Paddington Lord Randolph published in the *Morning Post* — which almost alone among Metropolitan newspapers remained well disposed towards him— the memorandum which he had written nearly two years before. The memorandum, he explained, had been intended to be 'a strong but friendly protest against the measure.' The speech of the previous Tuesday was intended, so far as lay in his power, to prevent such a measure being ever proposed by a Government again. This document had a marked and decided effect upon public opinion. Seldom had a political prophet been so completely vindicated by the event. It was now proved that two years before the exposure of Pigott he had warned the Government of the discredit in which the Special Commission would involve them and had described beforehand in exact detail many of the evil consequences by which they were now overtaken.

All of a sudden party indignation began to subside, and that keen sense of justice never far removed from the English mind reasserted itself. The

1890 ÆT. 41 journalists and the wirepullers had laboured to excess and the inevitable reaction followed. Numbers of plain people began to write to the newspapers to protest against the attacks made upon one who had been so greatly concerned with famous Conservative victories. At Birmingham the Old Guard—Rowlands, Sawyer, and Moore-Bayley—contrived to parry the vote of censure by a simple resolution of confidence in the Government, which the rest, when it came to the point, were content to accept. Mr. Fardell resumed the Chairmanship of the Paddington Council, and that body received their member's reply without further comment or action. So that Lord Randolph was enabled, without more hindrance, to pursue his own path in his own way.

But while he cared little for the displeasure of political associates and nothing at all for the party outburst, there was one breach which caused him regret. Louis Jennings had been for the past four years an intimate friend and a close and valuable ally. He had become a friend at a time when others were falling away and after Lord Randolph had given up the power to help and reward good service. He had adhered to his leader with constancy, through much unpopularity and ridicule, and at the cost of his own political future—such as it might have been. Whatever cause he may have had for complaint, he had certainly repaid the injury to the utmost of his power. Nothing could be more disparaging to Lord Randolph Churchill personally or more prejudicial to the opinions he had expressed than that he and they should be publicly repudiated by the one man who of all others had stood by him until now. The political world found it difficult to believe that the tone of a speech apart from its tenor, a dispute about an amendment, or the accident of debate, could in themselves be a complete explanation of a sudden severance between such close political associates. Jennings volunteered no further information on the subject; and Lord Randolph Churchill to persistent inquiries merely replied: 'I was not aware, and could not be aware, that my speech would cause Mr. Jennings to withdraw his amendment and I am altogether unable to understand his reasons for this action. I had told him that I would vote for his amendment and speak in favour of it and, as a matter of fact, I did so. Mr. Jennings has acquired the reputation of being a man of reason, ability and sense, and his actions are presumably guided by those qualities. That being so, any further examination of his action against me last Tuesday does not particularly attract me.' 1890 ÆT. 41

Mr. Jennings left, however, among his private papers a statement carefully prepared while the episode was fresh in his mind. I am content to place this upon record exactly as it was written.[1]

The breach was never repaired. Lord Randolph Churchill would gladly have made friends, and took pains to let the fact be known to Mr. Jennings. But no communication, written or spoken, ever passed between them again. Whether from an enduring sense of wrong, or from vain regrets at such a miserable ending to four years of loyalty and labour, Mr. Jennings continued in antagonism, and from time to time employed his dexterous pen in sharp and sarcastic attack. There is an air of musty tragedy about old letters. Week after week, in packet after packet, since 1886, Jennings's neat handwriting recurs. Suddenly his letters stop, just as the Gorst letters had stopped five years before. He passes out of this story—was soon, indeed, to pass out of all stories men can tell. On that exciting night in March Lord Randolph Churchill had only five years to live. But Mr. Jennings had less than three. He took little further part in politics. He was returned for Stockport again at the General Election; but almost at once he declared that he must retire from public life. An internal malady had afflicted him, and he died somewhat suddenly on February 9, 1893, aged fifty-six years. The circumstances of his quarrel with Lord Randolph Churchill, no matter whether his anger was deserved or not, or on which side the balance of misunderstanding may have lain, cannot exclude from this account a full acknowledgment of his loyal, industrious and fearless comradeship. He suffered the vexations and disappointments which must always harass those who fight for lost causes and falling men.

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[1] Appendix VIII.

The strange and memorable episode of the Parnell Commission lies at the present in a twilight. It has drifted out of the fierce and uncertain glare of political controversy. It is not yet illumined by the calm lamp of the historian. Those whose influence initiated or sustained the policy seem abundantly vindicated by events. Their action was ratified by Parliament and never seriously impugned by the nation. Whatever injury resulted at the time to the cause of the Union—and no doubt the injury was grave—was more than healed by the unexpected proceedings in the Divorce Courts at the end of the year. If it be true, as some may think, that the conduct of Irish affairs by the Conservative Cabinet of '86 enabled Mr. Gladstone to advance the flag of Home Rule again at the head of a Parliamentary majority, it is also true that this second onslaught encountered a not less stubborn resistance and ended in an even more decisive and lasting success. Those who were responsible have no apparent cause to regret the course they took. Those who, on the other hand, opposed it, from whatever motive, were brushed aside, and could never persuade the public of their case. And yet such a strange place is England that there is scarcely anyone, from the Ministers who bear the burden, to the *Times* newspaper—left, through the policy of the Government it supported, loyal and indignant, with a quarter of a million to pay—who will not to-day confess, and even declare, that these proceedings were a grand and cardinal blunder from beginning to end; that an Executive has no business to thrust itself into disputes which the parties concerned may settle in the courts, and no right to erect special machinery for the examination of charges perfectly within the knowledge and scope of the law. So that if these things are affirmed

1890 Æt. 41 while the light is dim, while even the dust of conflict has not altogether subsided, we may be hopeful of the judgment which history will pronounce.

. . . . .

In these later years Lord Randolph Churchill was drawn increasingly towards a Collectivist view of domestic politics. Almost every speech which he made from 1889 to 1891 gives evidence of the steady development of his opinions. His interest in the problems of the labouring classes grew warmer and keener as time passed. He spoke his mind without the smallest regard to the susceptibilities of his party, or to his own influence and position; and he favoured or accepted doctrines and tendencies before which Liberals recoiled and even the most stalwart Radicals paused embarrassed. He urged the House of Commons to examine the demand for a general eight hours' day 'with a total absence of anything like dogmatism.' He replied with some asperity to Mr. Bradlaugh, whose outspoken condemnation of the State regulation of the hours of adult labour had evoked delighted cheers from the Conservative party. He often wondered, he said, whether Mr. Bradlaugh or Mr. Chamberlain would be the first to take a seat on the Treasury Bench. He was sceptical, in the face of Income Tax and Revenue Returns, about 'the narrow margin of profit' remaining to capital. His answer to a deputation of miners who waited in succession on him and Mr. Gladstone to urge the enforcement of an eight hours' day in the coal trade was accepted by them as far more favourable to their desires than anything that fell from the Liberal leader. He voted for the principle of the payment of members of Parliament. He took a leading part in the movement to provide North-West London with a polytechnic institution—'a university for labour,' as he described it. 'An Englishman,' he said, 'possesses over Europeans one immeasurable and inestimable advantage. Out of the life of every German, every Frenchman, every Italian, every Austrian, every Russian, the respective Governments of those countries take three years for compulsory military service. If you estimate those three years at eight hours per day for six days a week, you will find that out of the life of every European in those nations no fewer than 7,500 hours are taken by the Governments of those countries for compulsory military service, during which time the individual so deprived is, for the purposes of contributing to the wealth of the community as a whole by his labour, as idle and useless and unprofitable as if he had never been born. But in our free and happy country, where the freedom of existence has practically no reasonable limits and where only a very minute portion of the population voluntarily embraces a military career, every man who lives to the age of twenty-three or twenty-four, possesses as an advantage over the inhabitants of foreign countries an extra capital of at least 7,500 hours. That immeasurable superiority, if properly taken advantage of by the provision of adequate educational institutions, is what should enable us to put aside alarm as to foreign

1890 ÆT. 41 competition.' His Licensing Bill, which he introduced on April 29, 1890, in the last great speech he ever made to the House of Commons, while it affirmed the justice of compensation, asserted for the first time in Parliament the principle of popular control over the issue of licences.

All these questions trench too closely upon current politics to be conveniently examined here. But it is not difficult to understand why his opinions did not win Lord Randolph Churchill the support of every section of the Conservative party. And yet all the while, in spite of his public declarations—obstinately repeated—there continued in the Tory ranks a steady and at times a powerful pressure to bring him back to the Government. Session after session had been scrambled through in dispiriting fashion. The mismanagement of Parliamentary business, the failure of important legislative projects, the abiding discredit of the Pigott forgery, the lack of any life or fire or inspiration in the conduct of affairs, sank the Conservative party and the Unionist alliance lower and lower in public estimation.

By June 1890 Lord Salisbury's Administration was in the utmost peril. The Government majority upon a decisive division fell to four.[1] Their licensing proposals were ignominiously withdrawn. Their attempt to carry business over to an autumn session failed. And in these hard times many Conservatives who disagreed altogether with Lord Randolph Churchill's views felt that his return to a commanding place was a necessary condition, if the waning fortunes of their party were to be retrieved. Ministers of importance approached Lord Salisbury. Sir Michael Hicks-Beach urged him not to allow the object of excluding Lord Randolph Churchill to prejudice the interests of the Unionist cause. Tory papers wrote favourable articles. Tory worthies met together in the Conservative Club under the presidency of Sir Algernon Borthwick, to entertain the 'prodigal son.' 'Randolph must return' was everywhere the whisper and the word. But Lord Salisbury was firm. Nothing would induce him to divide his authority again. And having regard to all the circumstances which have been related, he was, from his own point of view, unquestionably right. He knew well that Lord Randolph Churchill had altered no whit, had retracted nothing; and that, if he rejoined the Ministry, he would labour as of old, without stint or pause, with riper gifts of knowledge and experience and under conditions more favourable perhaps than in 1886, to guide and to deflect the policy of a Conservative Government into democratic and progressive paths. Better a party or a personal defeat; better a Parliamentary collapse; better even an Imperial disaster!

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[1] Local Taxation Bill, June 17—228 to 224.

Fortune favours the brave. The courage and tenacity of the Prime Minister received an unexpected relief. The downfall of Parnell was at hand. Her Majesty's Government regained in the Divorce Court the credit they had lost before the Special Commission. The ranks of the English Home Rule

1890 ÆT. 41 party, lately so exultant, were broken in dismay; and Nationalist Ireland, hitherto united under one controlling hand, was distracted by enduring and ferocious feuds. This peculiar episode may have settled decisively the fate of the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland. It also terminated for ever, without hope or expectation of renewal, the protracted conflict between the New Tories and the Old.

. . . . . .

Meanwhile outside the House of Commons and the forbidding circles of politics Lord Randolph was developing during these years new interests and amusements. Excitement in one form or another always attracted him, and after his resignation he sought it on the Turf. In partnership with Lord Dunraven he soon acquired a number of horses, to whose training and running he paid the closest attention. He became a shrewd judge of 'form.' In handicaps especially, his forecasts were so often fulfilled that he acquired quite a reputation among his sporting friends. On the morning of a race meeting he would sit for hours pencilling upon the card, by the aid of *Ruff's Guide*, calculations which led very often to conclusions that were right and still more often to conclusions that were nearly right. Under his eye Sherwood's stable became successful and for two years at least stood high in the winning lists. His footsteps fell upon some odd streaks of luck. While he was away fishing in Norway, in the summer of 1889, his mare the Abbesse de Jouarre won the Oaks at odds of twenty to one. At Doncaster, the year before, he dreamed he saw a number hoisted. On consulting his card the next day he found that only one horse running had so high a number. Inquiries led to the belief that this horse had a much better chance than the odds at which it stood suggested. Lord Randolph backed it heavily and won a considerable sum. Against the advice of his trainer he insisted on running the Abbesse de Jouarre for the Manchester Cup in 1889, and her victory constituted perhaps his most fortunate speculation. Of other horses which he owned or leased it is not necessary to speak, but during the years 1887 to 1891 Lord Randolph's colours—'chocolate, pink sleeves and cap'—were often to the fore.

Standing, as he did, apart from the ordinary groupings of party, he cultivated during these years pleasant relations with politicians of every shade. At his sister Lady Tweedmouth's house he met Mr. Gladstone more frequently than he had ever done before. Lord Randolph treated the illustrious old man with the utmost deference, and each appears to have derived much satisfaction from the other's society. 'He was the most courtly man I ever met,' observed Mr. Gladstone in later years to Mr. Morley. At one dinner at Brook House Mr. Gladstone had talked with great vivacity and freedom and held everyone breathless. 'And that,' said Lord Randolph to a Liberal-Unionist friend, as they walked out of the room together, 'that is the man you have left? How could you have done it?'

1887–1893 His own society was eagerly sought by his friends; for he had much treasure to give as a companion, if only he were in the giving vein. The gay and reckless brilliancy of his conversation fascinated all who came within its range. He would talk and argue with entire freedom on every subject. He loved to defend daring paradoxes; and when forced to exert himself he would produce arguments so original and ingenious that the listeners were delighted, even if they were unconvinced. He sometimes amused himself by saying things on purpose to shock ponderous people, and in painting himself extravagantly in the darkest hues, so that they departed grieved to think there was so much wickedness left in the world. He excelled in all kinds of chaff and conversational sword-play—from sombre irony to schoolboy fun. When he wanted to persuade people to do any particular thing, he took enormous pains, seeming to touch by instinct all the feelings and reasons which moved or disturbed them, and very often he coaxed or compelled them to his wishes. On the other hand, he did not care how rude he was to those who wearied or irritated him, and he would toss and gore fools with true Johnsonian vigour and zest. In this abrupt and impulsive way he hurt the feelings of some harmless people and disquieted a good many more; but if he were sorry afterwards, as he very often was, he could nearly always make amends by a word or a smile or some little courtesy, and the sun shone out all the brighter for the storm. Although in his later years the nervous irritability of his nature became extreme, he steadily enlarged the circle of his private friends, and those who had known him long, were increasingly attached to him. Not without justice could they apply to him Addison's well-known lines :—

> In all thy humours, whether grave or mellow,
> Thou'rt such a touchy, testy, pleasant fellow,
> Hast so much wit, and mirth, and spleen about thee,
> There is no living with thee, nor without thee.[1]

Lord Randolph was wont to pass much of the autumn and winter abroad and each year he pushed his travels further afield and remained a longer time. In August of 1888 he had visited Tarbes—the constituency which returned his friend the Marquis de Breteuil to the French Chamber—and here spent some placid agreeable weeks of fine weather amid splendid mountains, while his companion conciliated the principal electors by intercourse and entertainment. Of the attractions of Tarbes and its neighbourhood—better known, perhaps, to French and Spanish visitors than to the English tourist—it would be superfluous to write, for they were set forth by the local newspaper in a passage whose hospitable extravagance I shall venture to quote :—

> Nous apprenons l'arrivée dans notre département de lord Randolph Churchill, qui vient y retrouver son ami M. le Marquis de Breteuil.
>
> Nous souhaitons la bienvenue dans nos montagnes au noble Lord, au brillant orateur de la Chambre des Communes.
>
> Il est certain d'y recevoir un accueil cordial de la part de

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[1] Addison, *Spectator*, No. 68.

nos députés et courtois de la part de nos populations qui n'ont jamais failli aux devoirs de l'hospitalité.

Il y retrouvera, avec un climat plus doux même que celui du Devonshire, des sites plus enchanteurs encore, des sommets plus élevés que le Snowdon, des lacs aussi bleus que le Lomond, des torrents plus impétueux que le Glen et le Liddel.

Si le daim, le cerf et la grouse nous font défaut, nous avons l'izard, la caille savoureuse, la perdrix noire, la perdrix blanche, le coq de bruyère, la bécasse, le lièvre, etc. L'ours même s'y rencontre, mais . . . difficilement.

Chose plus importante encore, si l'honorable membre de la Chambre des Communes avait, victime de son éloquence, le larynx fatigué, les eaux merveilleuses de Cauterets seraient là pour le guérir.

De toutes les façons, nous avons la conviction que lord Churchill emportera de nos Pyrénées un bon souvenir.

To his Wife.

Tarbes: August 1, 1888.

Here we are very peaceable and comfortable—beautiful weather, splendid mountains, and nothing to bother about. This is a charming place; house and garden both very pretty. Breteuil's electors drop in at odd times, and some remain to breakfast and some to dinner. They are not very amusing, but very harmless and interesting as types of French provincial society. The worst of the electors is that they will not go to bed; but remain very late. I suppose they are too glad to get an evening out.

The charm of this place is the absence of any crowd. French and Spaniards are the only people who come here and English and Americans are conspicuous by their absence. I tried the 'douches' at Cauterets. They are very pleasant at the moment, but, I think, enervating. We dined last night in company with Mons. de Gontaut, formerly Ambassador in Berlin—a charming old man. . . . Yesterday we drove to Lourdes, a very extraordinary place—a monument of 'la bêtise humaine.' A great number of electors are coming to dinner in the evening.

. . . .

I have just seen a man 118 years old. His father lived to be 114, and died from a fall from a horse; his mother lived to be 108. He is a Spaniard who lives at Tarbes—quite a poor man, subsisting on charity; looks about 70 years old, has all his teeth, lots of grey hair, and he walked here all the way from the town—about three-quarters of a mile. There is no doubt about his age, as his papers are all in order. He served eight years in the French army in Spain and was present at the siege of Saragossa. He said he would be glad to die, as he was quite tired of living so long. . . . Breteuil's colleague in the representation of this department arrived this morning.

Now in 1890 he would go to Egypt, where with two old friends he had leased a *dahabeah* on the Nile. His letters to his wife, from which I make a few extracts, describe the even progress of the journey.

Monte Carlo: November 25, 1890.

So to-day is the meeting of Parliament. How thankful I am not to be going down to the House! In this morning's *Galignani* there is a sensational announcement that a dissolution of Parliament is to take place in the spring. I do not believe it, though perhaps, as Parnell's love affairs have thrown disarray among the Home Rulers, some of the Ministers might think it a good moment. But 'a bird in the hand' is what Lord S. will be guided by.

Rome: December 3, 1890.

Your nice long letter was very pleasant to receive. I should like to get them very often. I also got your telegram about a letter from Fardell posted to Naples, which I suppose I will receive to-morrow. I hope he does not announce a dissolution. Parnell's manifesto is a masterpiece. He lifts the issue between himself and Mr. Gladstone from the small ground of the divorce up to the large ground of a great political question. He may hold his own; but it must mean a complete smash-up of the Home Rule alliance. . . . The Government will be fools if they do not dissolve. This crash of the Home Rule party, this repudiation by Parnell of Mr. G.'s scheme, is the most complete and glaring justification of the Unionist cause. They will never get a better chance. However, I hope they won't do so, as it would spoil my Egyptian plans. . . . I fear that bad Land Bill may now pass and make heaps of difficulty and trouble for future Governments. . . .

Dahabeah, Ammon Ra, near Luxor: December 28, 1890.

It was very pleasant on waking up this morning to find a bundle of letters from you and others. They were brought down the river by one of Cook's steamers from Luxor, where we shall arrive in about an hour. . . . We have been eight days on the journey from Assiout, as, except for two days, the wind has not been favourable and our steam launch is not strong enough to tow us more than about three miles an hour. I cannot tell you how pleasant it has been; one day more perfect than another, and yet the heat has never been oppressive. The days slip by as if they were hours. The newspapers came to hand at Assiout—though newspapers here seem to be superfluities—and I was able to read up all the news to the 13th. . . . It certainly looks as if the Government had been immeasurably strengthened and would require no help from anyone. But all these things concern me very little. We are enjoying ourselves immensely. Life on the Nile is ideal. The scenery would be monotonous if it were not on so vast a scale; but as it is, one never tires of it. Certainly this is the only place to pass the winter if fine warm weather is desired. . . . I must say I wish you were on board this boat—a week of this weather and rest would make you as strong as a horse. Perhaps next winter, if we are alive and well, we may do it together. . . .

Lady Randolph Churchill.

From a drawing by John S. Sargent, R.A.

Dahabeah, Ammon Ra, Denderah: January 6, 1891.

I can, I fear, ill repay you for your very interesting letter of the 24th. All I can say is that it was thoroughly appreciated. I have little or nothing to tell you. A life without incident and without emotion has many advantages; but does not lend itself to correspondence, either as regards energy or material. I have seen Philæ and the Cataract, as also the temples of Edfoo and of this place—most interesting. Also a long expedition from Luxor to the tombs of the kings, some four thousand years old. Each king must have passed his lifetime in making his tomb, and if it was not finished when he died he had to go without. The weather has been perfect—day after day of cloudless skies, cool breezes and unparalleled sunsets. We read, we smoke, we lounge, we play picquet—at which I continue to hold exceedingly indifferent cards. . . . We shall dawdle out our time here as much as possible, as we do not want to be more than a day in Cairo.

To Sir Henry James, who wrote him accounts of the strange developments at Westminster, he framed a more elaborate reply than was usual with him in private correspondence:—

Dahabea, 'Ammon Ra.' Edfu, 60 miles south of Luxor:
Jan. 3, 1891.

Your amiable and friendly letter reached me here this morning on my return from a visit to and prolonged study of a temple erected by the Ptolemies 250 B.C. It is ridiculously modern compared with Karnac, but its comparatively perfect state enables one usefully to imagine what Karnac was. In such a frame of mind, embracing a period of 10,000 years, your home politics, your House of Commons interests, the eloquence of Smith, the courage of Balfour, the honesty of Hartington, the financial genius of Goschen and the adroitness of Joe, all acted upon, stimulated and developed by the lax morals of Parnell, present themselves

1891 — Æt 41 to my mental optics much in the same manner as fleas may attract the notice of an elephant. I am living with Rameses, Thotmes and Seti, and I have despised the Ptolemies as parvenus, and Cleopatra as ——! Imagine therefore how infinitely little becomes the struggle of the Kilkenny factions, the senile drivellings of Mr. Gladstone on Ravenswood which you think worthy of mention, the remorse of the officeless Harcourt or the doubting gloom of Morley. Here on this placid expanse of limitless plain and river and among these Egyptian temples you appear to me, as I say, like performing fleas. I was once a flea like you and skipped as nimbly as any of you, but have by some Pythagorean process emerged from that abject condition, and prefer musings over an immense past to worryings over a little present.

In addition to the attractions of this country and of its historic associations, we have and enjoy ideal weather, perfect peace, absence of all noise and a floating domicile in all respects comfortable; good food, hock, champagne, Pilsener beer, Marquis chocolate, ripe bananas, fresh dates, and literally hundreds of French novels, recourse to which is interrupted by games of picquet, in which the lucky Harry T[yrrwhit] has gained of me 10,000 1*d.* points. French novels, cards and Egyptian temples assimilate pleasantly, but English newspapers and English news are out of tune with these surroundings. And what pleases me most in your letter is the reflection to which it gives rise, that I still exist in the memory of a friend.

This is the part of the world in which you must pass your next winter. This heavenly climate will tame the most ferocious gout and tranquillise the most irritated nerves. If all is well, I will conduct you here next winter, introduce to you my friends Rameses & Co., forbid you the acquaintance of the vulgar Ptolemies, and gain from you 10,000 1*d.* points at picquet.

We have reached our Southern limit at Assouan, and are now leisurely floating down the current back to Cairo, back to noise, back to cold, back to tiresome women, back to *Times* leading articles, all inventions of the devil from which Providence has preserved the waters of the Nile. . . .

I do not think I have ever experienced so pleasant a time as during the last three weeks. I have arrived at the condition of the true philosopher; nerves calm, health good, everything to please the eye and the mind. The past affords matter for agreeable reflection. The future appears without vexation. I can inform myself with interest but without emotions either of pleasure or displeasure of the good or evil fortunes of my enemies or my friends, and I please myself with the imagination that if I were to die to-morrow, I should have experienced and exhausted, prudently abandoing before satiation, every form of human excitement. This is what you can come to if you spend your next winter in Egypt; and it is to repay you for your letter that I thus lengthily suggest to you the prospect of obtaining at least six weeks of happiness and peace in the year of our Lord 1891.

It is instructive to notice that Lord Randolph's conduct during the years that followed his resignation will bear a far more exacting scrutiny than the years of his good fortune. Differing as he did on many questions from the Government, separated from them by the personal dislike or distrust with which he was regarded, he had nevertheless given them, so far as he conscientiously could, a loyal and regular support. He had never spoken against them except when compelled by opinions plainly declared in former years, or moved by deep feeling; and then he had always practised a moderation in tone and language foreign to his disposition. He had done nothing to embarrass them or hamper them. He

1887–1890 had never made a personal attack on any of his late colleagues, nor can I discover any unkind or acrimonious word used about them. From time to time he had tried to influence their policy in directions which he believed the public interest and their own equally required; but these occasions had been rare and he had usually been right. Although the object of much abuse and even hatred from his old friends, he nourished no thoughts of permanent separation. 'Born and bred,' he wrote in 1891, 'in the Conservative party, I could never join the ranks of their opponents.' 'I have always been,' he told his constituents (February 22, 1891), 'more or less of an independent member. From the year 1874, when I entered Parliament, to the year 1880—during the time of Lord Beaconsfield's Government—I felt it my duty on more than one occasion to vote and speak against that powerful Government, and at times when in certain circles in London even to whisper a doubt as to its wisdom was considered almost treasonable. From 1880 to 1885 I pursued a course in Parliament of the greatest freedom and independence. More than once I went my own way, not caring much whether anyone followed; but I hardly think there are those who will assert that my action from 1880 to 1885 did injury to the Tory party. I have been unable even of late years to divest myself of my independent character. Lord Melbourne—or was it Lord Palmerston?—once characterised an independent member of Parliament as a member who could not be depended upon. Well, this much is certain. If I am called upon to support a reactionary and antiquated policy, then I am not to be depended upon. If I am called upon to approve illiberal or sham legislation, then I am not to be depended upon. If I am called upon to support an aggressive policy or a policy of large expenditure, then I am not to be depended upon. But if I am called upon to abide by pledges I have given on any platform or in any published letter or to support the political principles I have advocated, since I entered Parliament, then I can confidently point out to you my past career as a proof that I am to be depended upon—more, perhaps, than any devoted partisan of the present Government.'

These were the best years of his intellectual power—a short summer when his mind was most fertile and his judgment ripe and prescient. Almost alone and unsupported he had by sheer personal force and persuasive speech commanded respect and procured important decisions. Grave or gay, in attack, defence, or exposition, on all sorts of subjects and in all sorts of humours, the House of Commons had delighted to hear him; and what he said in Parliament or out of doors, whether about politics or other matters, was received and examined with national attention. But let it be observed that Lord Randolph Churchill was beaten, whatever he did, when he played the national game; and was victorious, whatever he did, while he played the party game. No question of 'taste' or 'patriotism' was raised when what he said, however outrageous, suited his party. No claim of truth counted when what he

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said, however incontrovertible, was awkward for his party. Yet almost fiercely he asserted his loyalty to the Unionist cause.

'It was not difficult for me to notice,' he wrote in 1891, in a letter to his constituents, never published, 'that after power was assured to the Tory leaders for some years by the General Election of 1886, it was their intention to stand on the old ways of Toryism in respect to Ireland, foreign policy and expenditure. Then I went away from them. On three occasions since during the last long five years have I gone against them: (1) When they threatened to recommence the policy of military expenditure in the Soudan; (2) when in 1888 the present Leader of the House of Commons, then Chief Secretary, ridiculed and denounced in the House the demand of the Irish members for Local Self-government; (3) when in 1890 I declared against the iniquitous and infamous policy of the Parnell Commission. With these three exceptions I often supported the Government by speech and vote in Parliament; I even spoke and voted in favour of their Coercion Bill in 1887, though I was much startled and disquieted afterwards by the manner of its administration; and in 1887, 1888, and 1889 I addressed large public meetings in their support. For the rest of the time, when I disagreed and doubted—as was often the case—I stood aloof and held my peace; and you must well remember that on more than one occasion in past sessions this strong Government and party managed to get themselves into the sorest straits, and that opportunities were offered of paying off some old scores which, if personal considerations had influenced me, I should not have neglected and which, I expect, not many politicians would have allowed to pass by. Bear this in mind, I pray you, in common justice when you hear me freely accused—as I have often been, and shall be again—of disloyalty to the Tory or the Unionist party; contrast the line of action I have followed with action followed in former Parliaments towards former Governments by former out-going Ministers; and I call upon you to acquit me fully of any charge of disloyalty.'

It had been proved to utter conviction in those barren years that 'ten men armed can subdue one man in his shirt.' One friend after another had fallen away from Lord Randolph. The hostility of the Prime Minister and the tireless machine-like detraction of the party press had not been without effect. His Parliamentary position was one of complete isolation and his popularity in the country had declined. Others—scarcely heard of in the days of battle—were now bearing the burden of the Unionist cause, and the public eye was fixed upon a stout-hearted bookseller whose perseverance as Leader was making of his repeated failures a curious but undoubted success, and upon an Irish Secretary whose reputation was every day enhanced by the taunts and revilings he provoked from his opponents. The Minister who seemed so powerful in 1886, the people's favourite, the necessary Parliamentarian, the central link of the Unionist alliance, certainly its most redoubtable champion, stood outside all political combinations, actual or potential. The Government of such a sickly infancy was grown up into a strong, if not a healthy manhood. The sunrise of wealth and extending comfort which in every nation lighted up the last quarter of the nineteenth century was strengthening by an unseen yet irresistible process the forces upon which Conservatism depends; and the millstone of Home Rule bowed and strangled the Liberals. There was neither need nor place for a leader of Tory Democracy.

All this was perfectly appreciated by Lord Randolph Churchill, and his detached contented mood and habit of thought were carefully and laboriously assumed and fortified by every trick of mental discipline he knew. A studied disdain of the course of public events, the influence of movement and of changing scenes, the delights of summerlands, books, friends and mild Egyptian cigarettes—all were to him the incidents of an elaborate art. But the characters of valetudinarian, pleasure-seeker, traveller, sportsman, failed to satisfy, and served scarcely to distract. Always at hand, though forbidden his mind, lurked the hopes and the schemes, once so real, now turned to shadows: and the thought—never quite to be chased away—of that multitude of working people he knew so well, who had trusted him as their champion; who were still ready, if they knew how, to do him honour; but for whom—though their problems were still unsolved, uncared for, or cared for only as counters in the game of politics—it was beyond his power to do the smallest service. And although the great river, gliding impassively along by the sands of the desert and the temples of forsaken faiths, might seem to smile at fretful aspirations, the reproach and disappointment silently consumed him.

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Further and further afield! After the session of 1890 Lord Randolph Churchill abandoned the House of Commons. He attended seldom; he never spoke. In the summer of 1891 he sailed for South Africa in quest of sport and gold—and peace. A journey to Mashonaland was in those days an enterprise of some difficulty; nor, indeed, before the overthrow of the Matabele power, devoid of risk. Elaborate arrangements were required to conduct even a small party in comfort through these untrodden fields. The command of the miniature expedition was entrusted to Major Giles, a traveller well acquainted with the country. As killing game was a necessity as well as an amusement, one of the best hunters in South Africa, Hans Lee, was included in the party; and Mr. Perkins, a mining engineer of the highest eminence, was engaged to search for gold.

The interest with which Lord Randolph was regarded by the public had survived his popularity and all these preparations excited general curiosity and afforded fertile themes for comment and satire. He was persuaded to write a long series of letters for the *Daily Graphic* by the extraordinary offer of a hundred pounds for each letter. Every incident of his journey, even the most trivial, especially the most personal that could be discovered, was telegraphed to England by assiduous reporters and discussed with genial malice by the Conservative newspapers. He was burlesqued on the Gaiety stage with a wit so pointed that the song was stopped by the intervention of the Lord Chamberlain. While paragraphs, lampoons and caricatures exhibited him daily to the ridicule of his countrymen; while the delegates of the National Union hooted his name at their annual conference; and while the chiefs of the Tories complacently admired the fulness of their triumph, the ex-Minister plunged into vast solitudes. Across the veldt by bush and kloof and kopje, through the drifts of flooded rivers, by mining camps and frontier posts into magnificent wildernesses toiled the tiny caravan. A gust of bracing air and rough exertion breaks in upon the artificial ventilation of the House of Commons. The crowded benches, with the yellow light streaming down upon them from the ceiling, recede into the distance. Waggons creak and jolt along stony tracks, camp-fires twinkle in the waste, antelope gallop over spacious pastures, lions roar beneath the stars——

All this has been described by Lord Randolph Churchill himself in the book in which his published letters were finally compiled.[1] I will not tell a twice-told tale. It was not perhaps surprising that a relentless criticism should have denied to these productions all title to literary merit. Their commercial value consisted mainly in the personality of the writer; and that personality was the object of powerful and widespread prejudice. The extravagant price paid for them was an incitement to every sharp pen less generously rewarded. The letters themselves make no pretence to elegance. Here and there a touch of quaint humour, a caustic or jingling phrase, or a rhetorical passage—but for the most part they tell a plain story of sport and travel, as such stories have often been told before.

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[1] *Men, Mines and Animals in South Africa.*

One extract shall suffice:—

> We were riding along through a small open glade covered with high grass, Lee a few yards ahead of me when I suddenly saw him turn round, cry out something to me, and point with his finger ahead. I looked, and saw lolloping along through and over the grass, about forty yards off, a yellow animal about as big as a small bullock. It flashed across me that it was a lion—the last thing in the world that I was thinking of. I was going to dismount and take aim, for I was not frightened at the idea of firing at a retreating lion; but Lee called out in succession five or six times, 'Look, look!' at the same time pointing with his finger in different directions in front. I saw to my astonishment, and rather to my dismay, that the glade appeared to be alive with lions. There they were, trooping and trotting along ahead of us like a lot of enormous dogs, great yellow objects, offering such a sight as I had never dreamed of. Lee turned to me and said, 'What will you do?' I said, 'I suppose we must go after them,' thinking all the time that I was making a very foolish answer. This I am the more convinced of now, for Lee told me afterwards that many old hunters in South Africa will turn away from such a troupe of lions as we had before us. We trotted on after them a short distance to where the grass was more open,

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the lions trotting along ahead of us in the most composed and leisurely fashion, very different from the galloping-off of a surprised and startled antelope. Lee now dismounted and fired at a lion about fifty yards off. I saw the brute fall forward on his head, twist round and round and stagger into a patch of high grass slightly to the left of where I was riding.

I did not venture to dismount with such a lot of these brutes all around ahead of me, not feeling at all sure that I should be able to remount quickly enough and gallop away after shooting. My horse, untrained to the gun, would not allow me to fire from his back and would probably have thrown me off had I done so. I stuck close to Lee, determined to leave the shooting to him unless things became critical, as his aim was true. His nerves were steady, which was more than mine were, though I do not admit that I was at all frightened. I counted seven lions; Lee says there were more. I saw, and cried out to Lee, pointing to a great big fellow with a heavy black mane trotting along slightly ahead of the rest. He was just crossing a small spruit about one hundred yards ahead and as he climbed the opposite bank offered his hind quarters as a fair target. Lee fired at him, at which he quickened his pace and disappeared in front. We approached the spruit and, almost literally under my nose, I saw three lions tumble up out of it, climb the opposite side and disappear. Now I own I longed for my shooting pony Charlie, for they offered me splendid shots, quite close, such as I could hardly have missed. I raised my rifle to take aim at the last; but, perhaps fortunately for me, he disappeared, before I could fire, in the high grass on the other side. I saw Lee fire from his horse at one as it was climbing the bank, which he wounded badly. It retreated into a patch of thick grass the other side of the spruit, uttering sounds something between a growl, a grunt and a sob.

Mashonaland yielded no golden results to the practised eye of Mr. Perkins; and it was not until the expedition had returned to Johannesburg that he unfolded his novel theory of deep levels. At this time the outcrop of the Great Banket reef was the only gold area which was being worked. Mr. Perkins observed the slant at which the strata emerged from the upper soil. He calculated accordingly. He advised the purchase of farms and properties along the south side of the ridge. By striking down directly into the earth the Great Banket reef would again be overtaken—richer perhaps than ever before. Lord Randolph Churchill must have stood at this time very close to an almost immeasurable fortune. Such a vital thought could not, however, remain secret—was already occurring to other minds. But the investments which he made were not inconsiderable or ill-judged, and were sold at his death for upwards of 70,000*l*.

While such business and adventure occupied his mind the leadership of the House of Commons fell vacant. Mr. Smith's heavy task was at an end. For two sessions he had struggled against ever-increasing physical distresses. Hour after hour he had sat on his Bench with his rug across his knees—a pathetic and not unheroic figure. Night after night he had risen in his place to discharge in singularly bad speeches his duty—as he would have phrased it—to 'Queen and country.' Now he was gone, and Lord Salisbury made haste to appoint Mr. Balfour in his stead. His selection was almost universally applauded.

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Lord Randolph Churchill to his Wife.

Mafeking, November 23, 1891.

So Arthur Balfour is really leader—and Tory Democracy, the genuine article, at an end! Well, I have had quite enough of it all. I have waited with great patience for the tide to turn, but it has not turned, and will not now turn in time. In truth, I am now altogether *déconsidéré*. I feel sure the other party will come in at the next election. The South Molton election is another among many indications. No power will make me lift hand or foot or voice for the Tories, just as no power would make me join the other side. All confirms me in my decision to have done with politics and try to make a little money for the boys and for ourselves. I hope you do not all intend to worry me on this matter and dispute with me and contradict me. More than two-thirds, in all probability, of my life is over, and I will not spend the remainder of my years in beating my head against a stone wall. I expect I have made great mistakes; but there has been no consideration, no indulgence, no memory or gratitude—nothing but spite, malice and abuse. I am quite tired and dead-sick of it all, and will not continue political life any longer. I have not Parnell's dogged, but at the same time sinister, resolution; and have many things and many friends to make me happy, without that horrid House of Commons work and strife. After all, A. B. cannot beat my record; and it was I who got him first into the Government, and then into the Cabinet. This he and Lord S. know well. . . . It is so pleasant getting near home again. I have had a good time [out here], but now reproach myself for having left you all for so long, and am dying to be again at Connaught Place.

. . . .

CHAPTER XXII

OPPOSITION ONCE MORE

> Though much is taken, much abides; and tho'
> We are not now that strength which in old days
> Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are;
> One equal temper of heroic hearts,
> Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will
> To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.
>
> TENNYSON: *Ulysses.*

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THE variations of English politics are continual, and at times so swift that those who influence them and are in turn influenced by them are hardly conscious of the pace they are travelling. As the general situation alters, the relations of its principal characters insensibly change. The doubtful or indifferent acquaintance of one year is the trusted comrade of the next. Combinations impossible in January are inevitable in June. Mortal offences are forgotten, if they are not forgiven; and as the ship moves forward into newer waters only a fading streak of froth lingers on the surface of the sea.

Lord Randolph Churchill returned from South Africa early in 1892, to find, so far as he was concerned, a better temper and complexion in public affairs than at any time since his resignation. The

1892 ÆT. 43 life of the Government was ebbing away; the appeal to the country could not be long delayed; and although the Parnell disclosures had immensely strengthened the Unionist position, there was little in the record or character of the Administration to excite popular enthusiasm. The drag of six years of office made its effect felt, and the Grand Old Man seemed still to enjoy the unconquerable splendour of his powers. That feeling of closing up the ranks, usually the prelude to a General Election, was abroad in the party; and its chiefs, though he did not at first realise it, looked in amity, not unmingled with anxiety, to the erstwhile leader of Tory Democracy, who had done such great things with the electors in the past and might, for all they knew, exert even a greater influence in the future. His reappearance in the House of Commons in the first days of February created a stir, which his silent and reserved demeanour did not speedily allay. Alike in the lobbies and the newspapers the question was debated, 'What is he going to do?' And it must be admitted that his answer to the resolution in which the South Paddington Conservative Association inquired whether he proposed to stand, and if so whether he would support the general policy of the Conservative party, did not altogether remove the uncertainty which existed.

'I would be obliged to you,' he wrote to the Secretary of the Association (February 4, 1892), 'if you would inform the Committee that, as at present advised, it is my intention in the event of a dissolution of Parliament to offer myself to the constituency for re-election and that in taking that course I should hope that I might rely upon the renewed support of the body which the Committee represent. It would further be my intention, in the event of my being re-elected as member of Parliament for the borough, to give to the Tory party the same support which I have given to it since the year 1874, when I first entered Parliament. Of the usefulness of that support it is not for me to judge; it is sufficient for me to say that my action in the future in the House of Commons would be in accordance, and consistent, with my action in the past.' 1892 ÆT. 43

To FitzGibbon he wrote with greater plainness:—

Penn House, Amersham: January 13, 1892.

It was too pleasant to get a sight of your handwriting again. My travel through South Africa was as nice an experience as anyone could have, and though I am very glad to get back I really enjoyed every hour of my journey. I think I find H. M. G. in a very weak and tottering state; their feelings towards myself more bitter and hostile than ever. But I imagine that, willy nilly, they will have to shake off or subdue their prejudices, for great troubles are before them. My information is that a large, influential and to some extent independent, section of Tories kick awfully against Irish Local Government and do not mean to vote for it. This comes from a very knowledgeable member of the Government outside the Cabinet. If the Government proceed with their project they will either split or seriously dishearten the party, and to do either on the verge of a General Election would be suicidal. This is what they ought to do: They ought to say this Irish Local Government is far too large a question to be dealt with by a moribund

Parliament; they ought to confess that there is not sufficient agreement among their supporters as to the nature and extent of such a measure, such as would favour the chances of successful legislation, and that they have determined to reserve the matter for a new Parliament, when the mind of the country upon their Irish administration has been fully ascertained. But I would not stop there. What is the great feature of the political situation in Ireland now? The resurrection in great force of priestly domination in political matters. Now I would cool the ardour of these potentates for Mr. G. by at once offering them the largest concessions on education—primary, intermediate, and University—which justice and generosity could admit of. I would not give them everything before the General Election, but I would give a good lot, and keep a good lot for the new Parliament. I do not think they could resist the bribe; and the soothing effect of such a policy on the Irish vote and attitude would be marked. Of course the concession would have to be very large—almost as large as what the Bishops have ever asked for—but preserving always intact Trinity College. It would assume the material shape of a money subsidy. What do you think of this? What is the frame of mind of the Bishops? What form and scope would you give to such a measure or measures as I suggest?

H. M. G. have no imagination or originality. The keystone of their policy has been to play against the life of Mr. G. This (not very noble, but still human) policy should, once taken up, be pursued remorselessly. To carry on the policy, the life of the Parliament should be prolonged into '93. How to do this? Introduce a measure dealing largely with the registration laws.

'One man one vote'—a trifle—could be conceded; twelve months' residence in lieu of eighteen established; paid officials for preparing register appointed in all constituencies. The new register could not be ready before the early spring of next year, and the convenient time for the election would be the summer or autumn. Now, my dear FitzGibbon, imagine the consternation, fury and utter paralysis of the Gladstonians if the Government were to make this complete *volte-face*—this tremendous surprise (all so logical and defensible as it is), the relief and joy of the Tories at getting rid of Local Government and at getting another year of life! Do not show this to anyone, unless it be to David Plunket, if he is with you—the Government are too fond of appropriating my ideas without acknowledgment—but write me all you think about it. I could write pages in support of it, but your own wily and Ulysses kind of mind will suggest to you all the wonderful elaboration of which it is susceptible.

And again in April:—

Politics attract me less and less and I successfully resist all invitations to take part in them, whether in Parliament or in the country. I really sincerely do not think that an offer of office would cause me the slightest emotion or drag me from my freedom and carelessness. However, that speculation is not likely to be put to the test. I have now a nice position—well with my constituents, well with my party—and am inclined to let well alone. I anticipate with amiable malice a Unionist defeat, and speculate on the nature of their struggles to resume power after that defeat. Balfour is doing very well, and has been much benefited by the senseless outcry raised against him by the Opposition. . . . Did you see my beautiful Latin letter to the [Trinity] College authorities, corrected and revised by Welldon of Harrow! It ought to have been published.

As the dissolution approached, overtures were made to him to contest several constituencies and he was pressed on all sides for his assistance. He declined everything. 'It is not my intention,' he wrote to one ardent Tory Democrat,[1] 'to make any

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[1] The Hon. Lionel Holland.

1892 Æt. 43 political speeches at the present time. Formerly I made many; but the labour was thankless and fruitless. Besides, I have not the smallest idea what the programme of our party now is. . . . From 1880 to 1886 I advocated on my own account a generally liberal and progressive policy, with the result that when I came into office I found that none of my colleagues were prepared to give to this policy the smallest genuine support; and that, office having been reached, promises to the people were to be forgotten or evaded. This experience I will never recommence; and it is for this reason that I decline, and must continue to decline, all invitations to take part in the platform exercises which precede the General Election.' In Parliament he remained silent. He admired Mr. Balfour's early essays in leading the House. 'At last,' he said, 'the Tory party have got a leader whom they like.' To one who told him that if he sat below the gangway he could soon overthrow the Government, he answered, 'No, no; Arthur Balfour is too often nearly right.'

The only interventions in outside politics which he allowed himself were a speech on Metropolitan affairs during the London County Council election and a letter to Mr. Arnold White, the Liberal-Unionist candidate for Tyneside. This letter, however, outlines so boldly the scope and direction of his views that it deserves to be quoted.

He wrote:—

The Labour community is carrying on at the present day a very significant and instructive struggle. It has emancipated itself very largely from the mere mechanism of party politics; it realises that it now possesses political power to such an extent as to make it independent of either party in the State; and the struggle which it is now carrying on is less against Capital, less one of wages or division of profits, but rather one for the practical utilisation in its own interest of the great political power which it has acquired. The Labour interest is now seeking to do itself what the landed interest and the manufacturing capitalist interest did for themselves when each in turn commanded the disposition of State policy. Our land laws were framed by the landed interest for the advantage of the landed interest, and foreign policy was directed by that interest to the same end. Political power passed very considerably from the landed interest to the manufacturing capitalist interest, and our whole fiscal system was shaped by this latter power to its own advantage, foreign policy being also made to coincide. We are now come, or are coming fast, to a time when Labour laws will be made by the Labour interest for the advantage of Labour. The regulation of all the conditions of labour by the State, controlled and guided by the Labour vote, appears to be the ideal aimed at; and I think it extremely probable that a foreign policy which sought to extend by tariff over our Colonies and even over other friendly States, the area of profitable barter of produce will strongly commend itself to the mind of the Labour interest. Personally I can discern no cause for alarm in this prospect and I believe that on this point you and I are in perfect agreement. Labour in this modern movement has against it the prejudices of property, the resources of capital, and all the numerous forces—social, professional, and journalist—which those prejudices and resources can influence. It is our business as Tory politicians to uphold the Constitution. If under the Constitution as it now exists, and as we wish to see it preserved, the Labour interest finds that it can obtain its objects and secure its own advantage, then that interest will be reconciled to the Constitution, will

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find faith in it and will maintain it. But if it should unfortunately occur that the Constitutional party, to which you and I belong, are deaf to hear and slow to meet the demands of Labour, are stubborn in opposition to those demands and are persistent in the habit of ranging themselves in unreasoning and short-sighted support of all the present rights of property and capital, the result may be that the Labour interest may identify what it will take to be defects in the Constitutional party with the Constitution itself, and in a moment of indiscriminate impulse may use its power to sweep both away. This view of affairs, I submit, is worthy of attention at a time when it is a matter of life or death to the Constitutional party to enlist in the support of the Parliamentary Union of the United Kingdom a majority of the votes of the masses of Labour.

You tell me that you find the designation 'Tory' a great difficulty to you. I cannot see any good reason for this. After all, since the Revolution the designation 'Tory' has always possessed an essentially popular flavour, in contradistinction to the designation 'Whig.' It has not only a popular but a grand historical origin; it denotes great historical struggles, in many of which the Tory party have been found on the popular side. Lord Beaconsfield—who, if he was anything, was a man of the people and understood the popular significance of names and words—invariably made use of the word 'Tory' to characterise his party; and whatever the Tory party may be deemed to be at particular moments, I have always held, from the commencement of my political life, that, rightly understood and explained, it ought to be, and was intended to be, the party of broad ideas and of a truly liberal policy.

His interest in Labour questions was, indeed, growing steadily. When the Eight Hours Bill for Miners was discussed that year in the Commons, he addressed a long private letter to Mr. Balfour praying for its considerate treatment. 'I humbly advise, but pressingly; in the debate let Gorst have a little Labour fling. Keep your hand tight over Matthews and, if you can see your way to it, make one of those interesting and amicable speeches which you can do so well, not exactly saying that your mind is open, but, to use a Gladstonianism, that it is not altogether absolutely closed. You can realise,' he added quaintly, 'how much importance I attach to the question when I tell you that I am actually coming up from Lincoln and missing three important races in which our horses run, to vote for the Bill. I do not think I would do this for the Monarchy, the Church, the House of Lords or the Union.'

The General Election came at that period, July, dear to the hearts of Tory organisers, when democracy is supposed to be under the soothing influence of summer weather, and before villadom has departed on its holidays. Lord Randolph took little part in it. He stood for South Paddington as a Conservative and an opponent of Home Rule. He let it be understood that if he was not interfered with by the Liberal party he would not speak outside the limits of his own constituency. This bargain seeming sufficiently good, in view of the fact that the seat was impregnable, no opposition was offered him. The only speech he found it necessary to make, and his election address, dealt almost entirely with the maintenance of the Union, though the latter also contained the following paragraph:—

'My views as to the reforms in the public service

1892 which public safety and economy alike urgently call

ÆT. 43 for, are, I think, well known to you; they have undergone no change, save that I hold them more strongly than ever. You are also, I imagine, not unaware of my desire to meet with all legitimate sympathy and good-will the newly-formed but very articulate and well-defined demands of the labouring classes.'

To FitzGibbon he wrote:—

> I cannot manage to get over for the Trinity College festivities. I have a great and increasing horror of anything in the nature of speeches and functions. We are all over here awaiting in suspense the result of the elections. . . . I have refused many invitations to speak. I do not think the time at all propitious for anything in the shape of a manifesto such as you suggest. Besides which, I have no contest in this constituency; and as the Radicals are not annoying me I do not want to provoke them. Nor do I feel called upon to take any action which may be of the slightest use to a Government and a party which for five years has boycotted and slandered me. . . .

The Paddington election proceeded smoothly to an unopposed return. Parliament met only to change an Administration and separate for the holidays.

> I am living [Lord Randolph wrote to FitzGibbon in November] a very quiet life in London, mainly occupied in reading books of one kind and another. I have two discourses to deliver, one at Macclesfield on the 30th inst. and one at Perth in December. Then *tacebo*. I hope John Morley will make a final adjustment of the grievances of those poor Christian Brothers. If I can usefully make any representations to him, instruct me. We have always been very good friends. Such Ministers as I have seen,

declare that they will soon be turned out; but I cannot see why this should be so. At any rate, beyond opposing their Home Rule Bill, I shall do nothing to bother them, as I very greatly prefer them to their predecessors.

This feeling of detachment was soon to be removed. The accession of Mr. Gladstone to power and the imminence of a Home Rule Bill was bound to unite in the most effective manner all sections of the Unionist party. Lord Randolph had, since his return from South Africa, accepted, though not without embarrassment, an invitation to dine with Lord Salisbury. 'C'est le premier plat qui coûte' wrote Wolff, who highly approved of the proceeding. Now Chamberlain sent a very friendly letter, and this was soon followed by a long and agreeable conference. The meetings which Lord Randolph had consented to address at Perth and Macclesfield in the autumn must have made his antagonism to the new Government plain; and only the sudden death of his brother the Duke of Marlborough, in November, which was a great shock to him, caused those arrangements to fall through; so that Parliament met in January, 1893, without his having formally joined himself to the official leaders of the Opposition.

With the opening of the Session and the beginning of the fight came full and complete reconciliation. He was urged to take his place again upon the Front Bench. 'If it had ever occurred to me,' wrote Mr. Balfour (January 30, 1893), 'that you could sit anywhere but on our bench, I would have spoken about it to you last night. *Everyone* desires you should do so, and *most of all* yours ever, A. J. B.' At the meeting of the Conservative party in the Carlton Club to consider the resistance to the Home Rule Bill, he kept himself in the background at some distance from Lord Salisbury. But after all the worthies had spoken, the assembly still found the proceedings incomplete and loud cries were raised from all parts of the room for 'Churchill.' At first there was no response, but so continuous and insistent was the demand that Lord Randolph eventually came forward and in a few simple words, which evoked remarkable enthusiasm, declared his willingness to serve, to the best of his ability, in the House of Commons under his friend and political chief, Mr. Balfour. He was henceforward invited to attend the private meetings of the Unionist leaders which were held at Devonshire House during the passage of the Irish Bill, and he took his share in framing the amendments and deciding upon the policy of the Opposition.

But now, when a new prospect was opening to his view, when he had been welcomed by the mass of the party, when he had returned to its inmost councils and ranged himself once again with his old friends and colleagues in whole-hearted support of a cause which he had long defended, a dark hand intervened. The great strain to which he had subjected himself during the struggle against Mr. Gladstone, the vexations and disappointments of later years and finally the severe physical exertions and exposure of South Africa had produced in a neurotic temperament and delicate constitution a very rare and ghastly disease.

During the winter of '92 symptoms of vertigo, palpitation, and numbness of the hands made themselves felt, and his condition was already a cause of the deepest anxiety to his friends. But it was not till he rose on the occasion of the introduction of the Home Rule Bill that the political world realised how great was the change. It happened that the debate was unexpectedly delayed by a question of privilege. The suspense proved a strain greater than he could bear with composure and when he rose his nervousness was extreme, and more to be looked for in some novice presuming for the first time than in a Parliamentarian of near twenty years' standing. He no longer dared to trust his memory: while the notes of his speech on the first Home Rule Bill had been written on a single sheet of paper, he now required eighteen. The House, crowded in every part to hear him, was shocked by his strangely altered appearance. It seemed incredible that this bald and bearded man with shaking hands and a white face drawn with pain and deeply marked with the lines of care and illness, and with a voice whose tremulous tones already betrayed the fatal difficulty of articulation, could be that same brilliant audacious leader who in the flush of exultant youth had marched irresistibly to power through the stormy days of 1886.

Yet the quality of his speech showed no signs of intellectual failing. Avoiding the network of details in which so many speakers had stumbled, he presented a broad intelligible picture. Lucid and original expression, close and careful reasoning, 1893 wealth of knowledge, quaint Randolphian witticisms

ÆT. 44 —all were there. Although much of the charm and force of his manner was gone, his statement was considered by good and impartial judges to have been, with the exception of Mr. Chamberlain's, the best speech delivered against the Bill.

And he was destined to have one last flicker of success. Once again was he to encounter, not unequally, his majestic antagonist; once again those he had been so proud to lead, were to sustain him with triumphant acclamation. Exactly a week after his reappearance he was entrusted with the conclusion of the debate on the Welsh Church Suspensory Bill. The trying circumstances of his first effort were no longer present and the feeling that he had broken the ice comforted him. His whole condition varied sensibly from day to day. This was his good day. The House seemed friendly to him; his spirits responded to its mood, and for the moment he seemed to recover all, or nearly all, of his former power. Anyone who will take the trouble to read in Hansard the intricate and sustained argument and the ready rejoinders of the speech will see that the vigour of his mind was unimpaired. Triumph came at the end. Putting aside his notes, he began a fierce and sparkling attack on Mr. Gladstone. It is the last quotation I shall make:—

'What motive has influenced the right honourable gentleman and his colleagues to propose this measure to the House? It is not, as the member for Hertford said, "plunder." That is the local motive. The political motive is widely different. It is undoubtedly to secure votes for their Irish policy. On behalf of that Irish policy nothing must be spared—not even the Established Church in Wales. Votes! Votes! Votes! That is the cry of the right honourable gentleman, and that is the political morality which he preaches.

> Hæc Janus summus ab imo
> Prodocet. Hæc recinunt juvenes dictata senesque.

Votes at any cost, votes at any price. Refrain from nothing that can get you votes; adhere to nothing that can prevent your getting votes—the votes which alone can accomplish the political salvation of the Liberal party. I see before me,' he continued, backed by the clamorous growing support of the great party from whom he had been so long estranged, 'many distinguished gentlemen, as able as any that this country can produce, in the administration of public departments. But do you call that a Government? Whom do you govern? One day the Government is at the mercy of the Irish party; another day it is at the mercy of the Welsh party; and on a third day yet to come it will be in the power of the Scotch party. The Government is absolutely in the power of any of the three sections of its majority. It must concede when any section makes a demand. An English Government has never yet been conducted on such principles—better suited to a Whitechapel auction than to the conduct of our State.'

This characteristic attack produced an electrical

1893 effect upon Mr. Gladstone, and the years seemed to
ÆT. 44 fall from his shoulders as he rose at once to reply. 'I accept,' he cried, 'the monosyllabic invocation of the noble lord and I say "Vote, Vote, Vote" for both Welsh Disestablishment and Home Rule.' And in the course of a rejoinder which, though brief, was inferior to few, if any, of his later speeches, he cast back the reproaches of the Opposition and roused and rallied the enthusiasm of his followers amid a storm of cheers and counter-cheers. The First Reading passed by a majority of 56 in an angry and excited House, and the members hurried home, saying that the days of the 'eighties' were come back and that Randolph was himself again.

FitzGibbon, who was increasingly his correspondent, kept him supplied with an inexhaustible stream of fact and fancy upon the Irish Bill, and Lord Randolph's replies to his old friend constitute a sufficient account of his Parliamentary doings and domestic affairs :—

Branksome Dene, Bournemouth : January 15, 1893.

Many thanks for your letter. I am happy to say Winston is going on well and making a good and on the whole rapid recovery. He had a miraculous escape from being smashed to pieces, as he fell thirty feet off a bridge over a chine, from which he tried to leap to the bough of a tree. What dreadfully foolhardy and reckless things boys do! We have a sharp return of the cold, and snow is all about. I keep thinking of my good time in Ireland, which was the best I have had for a long time.

50 Grosvenor Square, W.: February 18, 1893.

Just a line to thank you for your letter. I imagine the speech produced not unsatisfactory effects. I was awfully 'jumpy.' The damned Bill is out, and I should greatly like from you, if you had spare time, a *critique raisonnée* of it. I shall have to make some speeches—probably one to a great meeting in Scotland at Easter time. The Second Reading is fixed for March 13, but this may be only a nominal date. I am very anxious about the result when it comes to a General Election. It is on England we must concentrate our efforts.

50 Grosvenor Square, W.: March 15, 1893.

It is most good of you taking so much trouble for me in respect of that measure, but I will try and make the best use of all you send me, and the 'lawyer's notes' may develop into orations which may electrify the country. If one can trust the statements of the Unionist Press, the Bill has absolutely no prospects or chances of passing. All the heart, what little there ever was, has been taken out of the Repealers by the postponement of the Second Reading. I only hope the end may not come too quick. The Local Veto Bill has infuriated the liquor interest even more than the H. R. Bill has Ulster.

I do not think the G. O. M. has influenza, but it may be some time before we see him again in the House of Commons.

50 Grosvenor Square, W.: March 29, 1893.

You are really too good, and I am shocked to have added so much to your work. Your notes will be most valuable to me and I am looking forward to their arrival. You will see that I loosed off last night against Mr. G. and Morley. I think our party were very much pleased. The old man is pressing us very hard with his demands for the time of Parliament and his refusal to give decent holidays. I have counselled that we do not enter on a futile resistance in which we must be overborne. I am all for giving him rope; he is sure to get into a terrible mess sooner or later.

I have a busy Easter before me. Political discourses at Liverpool and Perth, and I shall not get back to London

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till April 14. I shall keep your notes, though more for Parliamentary purposes; they will be too good for public meetings. With many thanks and much gratitude.

Penshurst: April 30, 1893.

Well, we have had three important meetings at Devonshire House—D. of D., M. of S., Joe C., Arthur B., Goschen, Sir Henry J., Atkinson, and myself. With the general result I am much pleased. I contended hard for the principle that none of our amendments should be in any sense constructive, nothing that could give rise to an idea that we were drifting into anything like an alternative scheme. Joe C. was much for leading us in this way, but Devonshire and Salisbury were very firm and the mischief was averted. Then there was another great danger avoided. Joe C., A. B., and Goschen were rather strongly in favour of an amendment excluding Ulster from the Bill. Your powers of reflection and discernment will show you at once what a horrid and dangerous trap that would have let us into. However, thanks again to Salisbury and Devonshire, the idea was dropped.

No amendments will be moved by any of us, but some have been drawn and will be given to others. James' amendments to the fifth clause are very ingenious. But I shall send you a paper of amendments marked after next Friday. We are to meet on Fridays when the H. R. Bill is in Committee. Government will not get their Committee Thursday: at the earliest not before Monday. I have not been very well lately, and the last three days have had a dreadful cough, which would quite have incapacitated me from speaking. I hope now it is yielding to treatment, and fortunately I have had no speeches to make. I am full of hope. There is much rumour that Mr. G. will go to the House of Lords. Harcourt is certainly very unwell. Belfast seems to have settled down. I have several speeches in the country before me in May. Write to me when you have time, but not in those horrid envelopes.

50 Grosvenor Square.

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I have just delivered a twenty minutes' speech in the House of Commons on the case of the Christian Brothers. We had a large majority against the Ulster Bill. You will find a passage in Morley's speech in which he said that he still hoped for an arrangement, and that if he was a member of the Board [of National Education] he should expect to be able to discover a method. The Tories are, I expect, very cross with me.

I think you can now go to work again.

50 Grosvenor Square, W.: July 11, 1893.

I wish you had not written in so uncomplimentary a strain about Rosebery. I would have shown it him but for that. I have the very highest opinion of his work,[1] and always describe it as a literary diamond. Now please write me another letter, more complimentary. You can bring out all the views which have occurred to you without accusing him of absolute ignorance of Ireland. Remember, he was in a very awkward position, and Mr. Gladstone was very cold to him after the work appeared. After all, he made one of the most luminous expositions of the benefits of the Union and that covers every error. Do do what I ask, for I am very fond of Rosebery and very intimate with him, and I always look forward to being in a Government with him. He likes you very much, and knows on what intimate terms you and I are. Write me a review, not longer than your letter, fair and *raisonné*. It will not take you long, and it might do a great deal of good.

This is not the place to describe the stormy and protracted Session of 1893. The ruthless persistency of the Government; the stubborn resistance of the Conservative party; the inch-by-inch struggle in Committee; Chamberlain's keen and unceasing attack from below the gangway; the venerable figure

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[1] *Life of Pitt.*

1893 — Æt. 44 of the Prime Minister, erect and unflinching, at the table; the mutilated procedure of Parliament; and the rising storm of partisanship on both sides contribute to an account which seems to approach by sure gradations a violent climax. Lord Randolph has left a record, in the form of a private letter to the Speaker, of the explosion:—

Lord Randolph Churchill to the Speaker.[1]

50 Grosvenor Square: July 29, 1893.

I am desirous of submitting to you a true account of the disturbance and the real cause of the disorder which occurred in the House of Commons on Thursday night.

The cry of 'Judas' was the retort to Mr. Chamberlain's expression 'Herod.' But Mr. Chamberlain has never taken any notice of it on previous occasions, nor did he on Thursday night, for I saw him smiling; and I do not consider that this exclamation was, except in a certain sense, the real cause of the turmoil. When Mr. Balfour left the House he told me that in the event of a division we were to vote with the Government against Mr. Clancy's amendment, a course in which I thoroughly concurred. I did not know the tremendous passions which were raging behind me. The division had begun and I was already proceeding into the Lobby, when, turning round, I saw that scarcely a single member of the party had moved. I returned, and told them of Mr. Balfour's wishes, and begged them to go into the 'No' Lobby. But I was met by cries that they would not divide, and I ascertained that Mr. Vicary Gibbs had been trying to raise a point of order on the question of the cry 'Judas,' and, because that had not been settled, this very considerable section of the Opposition would not on any account divide. I thought it obvious that a point of order could not be decided when a division had been called, for the reason that a number of members had left the House for the Lobby. I urged upon them that not leaving their seats to vote was the gravest violation of the rules of the House, but all to no purpose. I therefore proceeded myself into the Lobby, where there was a small muster of Liberals, three or four Ministers, but none, so far as I could see, of the Opposition.

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[1] Abridged.

We waited for about two minutes, when the sound of a great noise reached us. We returned to the House; the floor was crowded with members, all standing; there was much scuffling; and certainly the scene was the most appalling I ever witnessed. I made my way to the Front Opposition Bench again, and implored the occupants of the Opposition benches to come into the Lobby to record their votes. There was still time to take the division, if only they would have moved from their seats; but all my efforts were more useless than before.

When you took the Chair, Sir, Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Balfour (neither of whom had seen all that passed) informed you that you had been sent for to decide a point of order as to the propriety of the cry 'Judas.' With all respect nothing could have been more inaccurate. I lay down confidently that the whole disorder arose from the Opposition members being determined not to take part in the division and from the Chairman seeming not to know that he could compel them to do so under pain of very severe penalties.

I must excuse myself for wearying you, Sir, with this long statement, but I would make two justifications: (1) I read there is a possibility of an inquiry into the cause of the disturbance, and I am anxious that my evidence should be before you; (2) that there has been so much disorder and defiance of the authority of the Chairman of Committees by individual members of all parties during the progress of the Government of Ireland Bill that if it is not checked by the high authority which resides in yourself, Sir, the House

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of Commons will go from bad to worse, and it is impossible to foresee to what extent it may change its character in a very short time.

Lord Randolph's speech on the Welsh Church was his last Parliamentary success. Throughout the passage of the Home Rule Bill he held his place in the front rank of the Opposition and took a regular and not undistinguished part in the debates. In the Easter recess his speeches to large audiences at Liverpool and Perth commanded the attention of the country, and now, as in former years, he provided his party with an inexhaustible supply of catchwords and homely arguments. But the fire and force of his oratory were gone, never to return; and as the Session drew on, his difficulties of utterance and of memory increased, and the severe and unrelenting labour exhausted the remnants of his strength. Several times in the hot summer months he failed to hold the attention of the House and even sometimes to make himself understood. Once, indeed, the members grew impatient and the House was filled with restless murmurs. But his friends—some of them his most distinguished opponents—rallied to him, checked the interruptions, and tried perseveringly to make all look smooth and successful. And in these days it was observed that Mr. Gladstone would always be in his place to pay the greatest attention to his speeches and to reply elaborately to such arguments as he had advanced.

Lord Randolph Churchill was acutely conscious of his failing powers and the realisation roused him to immense exertions. A year before he had hardly cared for political affairs. Now he plunged desperately into the struggle. Others around him encountered the measures of a Liberal Administration. He faced a different foe. With the whole strength of his will he fought against the oncoming decay. He refused to accept defeat. He redoubled his labours. If five hours no longer sufficed for the preparation of a speech—he would take five days. If his memory played him false, it must be exercised the more. If the House of Commons was escaping from his grip, he would see whether the people would still hear him.

During the months of May and June he spoke at no fewer than ten important meetings—at Reading, Bolton, Macclesfield, Leicester, Carlisle, Pontefract, Boston and other big towns. Everywhere he was received by immense audiences and frequently he succeeded, as of old, in arousing their interest and enthusiasm. The fertility of his mind and the store of political knowledge and expression he had accumulated were astonishing. Almost every one of these speeches was reported verbatim in the *Times* newspaper. All were confined to the single subject of the Home Rule Bill and the circumstances that attended its passage. No repetition of argument or phrase can be detected in the entire series of speeches.

It was at this time that he looked towards Bradford. That city had even before the General Election invited him to contest its central division.

1893 ÆT. 44 His eye for a political country was as good as ever. To persuade a great commercial centre to change its party allegiance, to be returned at the election with three solid seats won for the Unionist cause, to entrench himself in the heart of Yorkshire was a plan most attractive to his nature; and had he lived, these objects would certainly have been accomplished; for all divisions of Bradford returned Unionist members to the Parliament of 1895 and that condition continues to this day. On May 26 he addressed a large meeting in the St. George's Hall. His candidature was adopted with enthusiasm by the local Conservatives. Meetings were held, the organisation was improved, the Unionist press was strengthened and supported, and a new impulse was imparted to the Conservative movement throughout the whole district.

For the autumn of 1893 he prepared a further extensive campaign all over the country, and he convinced himself that it was still in his power to raise a great wave of democratic excitement that would shake the Government and establish his position before the world. In order to collect all his strength for this effort he withdrew before the end of the Session to Kissingen and Gastein and submitted himself to the strictest discipline that the doctors could advise. The quiet peaceful life, with its simple routine of baths, walks and long drives, when the afternoon sun cast the shade of the forest and the hills over half the valley, seemed for a time to restore his health: and he hastened to write glowing accounts to his mother of the improvement. But these appearances were illusory and, underneath, the process of dissolution went remorselessly forward. 1893 ÆT. 44

One incident—not unworthy of record—diversified the weeks at Kissingen and lighted up the autumn of 1893 :—

To his Mother.

August 7.—The sensation of yesterday was the visit of Prince Bismarck. We had left cards on him the day before, and I did not expect he would do more than return them. However, yesterday the weather was showery, and as Jennie was rather seedy we did not go our usual drive. I was reading the papers when a great big Chasseur appeared and informed me that the Fürst von Bismarck was in his carriage at the door and was asking for me. I hurried downstairs and met the Prince at his carriage. He came up to our rooms—which luckily are on the first floor—and sat down, and we began to converse. I had sent off a message to Jennie, who had gone to the Kurhaus to see a friend. So I had about a quarter of an hour in which to talk to the Prince. I will tell you of his appearance. He is seventy-eight—so he told me afterwards—but he looks so much younger than Mr. Gladstone that in fact you would hardly give him more than seventy-three or seventy-four years. He looked in good health, and came upstairs without the slightest difficulty. We discussed various subjects, which I will go through *seriatim.* We spoke in English ; but whether it was for that reason, though he spoke very correctly, he struck me as being nervous. Perhaps it was meeting with a total stranger, because he had never seen me before. However, he was most gracious and seemed very anxious to please. You may imagine that I did my very best to please him, for I thought it a great honour for this old Prince to come and see us.

The conversation began on Kissingen—the baths, the waters, &c. He told me he had first come here in 1874, and had been here almost every year since. He gave up drinking the waters about eight years ago, but he continues to take baths, and thinks they do him good. After this I asked him why he never went now to Gastein. He said, laughing, 'Oh, Gastein is a peculiar water to some people—sometimes dangerous'; that he knew two of his friends who died of apoplexy when taking the baths; and added that his doctor had told him that Gastein was the last resource; and he remarked, 'And I am seventy-eight,' and seemed quite pleased about it. Then he talked about the Emperor William on a question as to whether Gastein had not added some years to his life. He quite admitted it, and told me that for many years the Emperor used to go to Carlsbad, when he used to accompany him; and this reminiscence seemed very pleasing to him. In talking of the Emperor he always used the expression 'my old master.'

Then I turned the conversation on to Siam, and asked him whether he did not think it was a satisfactory settlement. He appeared to agree and began speaking in this connection of M. Jules Ferry. He regretted his loss, and said that Jules Ferry was the best man that France had had for years, and joked a little about his appearance—long whiskers, &c. Then he went on to say that he thought, if Jules Ferry had remained in power, a very good arrangement and condition would have come about between the Germans and the French. He said that he had nearly concluded an agreement between himself and Jules Ferry that France should remain on friendly and peaceful terms with Germany, and that he (Prince B.) would support France in Tunis and Siam, and generally in her Eastern colonisation. Then I remarked about Siam that Rosebery had learned out of his book this principle—to ask for no more than he required, but to insist on getting what he required, and to treat with neglect what was not essential. He said that was so and he went on to praise Rosebery, and described him as a good combination of will and caution, and added that of all English statesmen he was the one who was most modest and quiet in his acts and attitude.

Of course, no conversation would be complete without a reference to Mr. Gladstone, to which I led him. He, of course, began by admitting that Mr. Gladstone was very eloquent; but that he had always been like an ungovernable horse whom no one could ride in any bridle, and was not to be controlled in any way. He used a German adjective to describe the horse, which I have forgotten; but seeing his drift, and in reply to his question what was the English expression for the German word, I said 'ungovernable and unmanageable and hard to ride' would express it, and I remarked that in England people often called such a horse a 'rogue.' On which he turned his face to me with a smile, but said nothing, though he clearly understood the allusion. He further in conversation said that he should be very alarmed and anxious if such a man as Mr. Gladstone governed 'my country.' Then Jennie arrived and he talked mainly to her for a few minutes, when he announced that his son Herbert and his recently married wife arrived that afternoon to stay a few days with him, and that he hoped we should see something of them.

Without doubt this Prince and statesman has a most powerful attraction. The whole of his career, from the time when he was First Minister of the King and fought the Parliament, to the time of the proclamation of the German Empire at Versailles, seems to me more intelligible now, and at the same time a work that only this man could have carried out or even conceived the possibility of. I never took my eyes off his face while he was talking to me and kept trying to fix it in my memory. For all his quiet manner his qualities would be apparent to any observer of experience; you can trace the iron will in great emergencies which has so frequently borne him up, all the calm courage for which the North Germans are peculiarly distinguished, and yet with all that—in spite of the recollection of the great things he had done—no trace of pride, no sign of condescension, but perfectly gracious and polite, a true *Grand Seigneur*. He carried himself at his age as erect as a soldier, and for

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all his long black coat and his rather old black, soft, low-crowned wideawake hat he looks all over what he is—the combination, so rarely seen in this century, of statesman and General.

This friendly conversation, proving mutually agreeable, was followed by an invitation to dinner with the Bismarck family. 'We dined,' so runs the account, 'in the hall of an old Bishop's palace, on the first floor, which a friend of the Prince owns and lends him every year. It was of large and fine proportion. At one end we assembled before dinner; at the other end the table was laid. The dinner was a regular old-fashioned German dinner, a little *bourgeois* (like the Berlin Court under the old Emperor), but everything was dignified as to the table—the food, the wine, the old servants—and, though very different to our ideas, had really *un air noble.* All this was greatly added to by the presence of the Prince, his impressive appearance, and the combination of respect and affection which all his family and those friends that were dining, showed him. His good spirits and excellent humour and his sustained support of the conversation—sometimes with Jennie, sometimes with me, sometimes with Herbert and his wife—can never be forgotten by any one who saw it.'

Lord Randolph sat next to Prince Bismarck and was so occupied in observing him and the scene generally that he took but little part in the conversation. The picture was complete—the Princess, feeble and broken in health; Count Herbert and his wife; the famous black wolf-hounds which once upon a time frightened Gortschakoff so much; Bismarck himself, 'speaking English very carefully and slowly, frequently pausing to get the right word, but always producing it, or something like it, in the end'; drinking a mixture of very old hock poured into a needle-glass of champagne—'"the last bottle [of hock], a present from——," a Grand Duke whose name I cannot remember'—at length arriving at his great pipe, prepared all ready for him by a venerable retainer, 'stem two feet in length, curved mouthpiece, bowl long and large in china and standing up square with the stem, lighted by broad wooden safety-matches to prevent him burning his fingers; and all the time running on in talk brisk and light, always courtly and genial, never quite serious.' 1893 ÆT. 44

'I did not dare,' declares Lord Randolph, 'to drink this old hock, and only sipped it. The Prince, who was joking, said to Jennie that he was very sorry I had not drunk my share, as it would cause him to drink too much and he would be "half over the seas."' Presently he wanted to know about Mr. Gladstone. He would be useful in putting to rights the disorders of German finance. Would the English people exchange him for General Caprivi. 'I told him,' writes Lord Randolph shamelessly, 'that the English people would cheerfully give him Mr. Gladstone for nothing, but that he would find him an expensive present!' So with chaff and good temper the evening passed away—pleasant, memorable, one of the last he was to know.

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Lord Randolph returned from Germany none the better for his rest and plunged forthwith into an exhausting campaign. What experience can be more painful than for a man who enjoys the fullest intellectual vigour, and whose blood is quite unchilled by age, to feel the whole apparatus of expression slipping sensibly from him? He struggled against his fate desperately, and at first with intervals of profound depression. But, as the malady progressed, the inscrutable workings of Nature provided a mysterious anodyne. By a queer contradiction it is ordained that an all-embracing optimism should be one of the symptoms of this fell disease. The victim becomes continually less able to realise his condition. In the midst of failure he is cheered by an artificial consciousness of victory. While the days are swiftly ebbing, he builds large plans for the future; and a rosy glow of sunset conceals the approach of night. Therefore as Lord Randolph's faculties were steadily impaired, his determination to persevere was inversely strengthened; and in spite of the advice and appeals of his family, by which he was deeply wounded, he carried out in its entirety the whole programme of speeches he had arranged. Huddersfield, Stalybridge, Bedford, Yarmouth, Dundee, Glasgow, Bradford and Camborne followed each other in quick succession in October and November. But the crowds who were drawn by the old glamour of his name, departed sorrowful and shuddering at the spectacle of a dying

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ÆT. 4

man, and those who loved him were consumed with embarrassment and grief. It is needless to dwell longer upon this.

He spent Christmas at Howth. The old circle of friends were gathered once more, and they saw with sadness that their hopes of his return to power, cherished for so many years, would never be fulfilled. When he came back to England for the beginning of the Session, the hounds were hard upon his track. But it was not till June that he consented to yield. The doctors ordered complete rest. 'They told me,' he wrote to his mother, 'that I was to give up political life for a year. I did not agree directly, but said I would think it over. I returned next day and explained to them my plan [of a journey round the world]. Of this they fully approved.' And now followed only a few dinners of farewell to good friends—who knew they would never see him again—and busy preparations for a long journey. He sailed, with his wife, for America on June 27 under a sentence of death, operative within twelve months; and he realised perfectly that his time was very short. But now Nature began mercifully to apply increasing doses of her own anæsthetics, and for the space there was yet to travel he suffered less than those who watched him. Indeed, in an odd way he was positively happy in these last few months; for the changing scenes kept him from sombre reflections, and the increasing attention which he paid to details of all kinds occupied his mind.

1895 Nothing was too small to command his interest, and Æt. 46 neither in America nor in Japan was ever seen so methodical a tourist. The light faded steadily. At intervals small blood-vessels would break in the brain, producing temporary coma, and leaving always a little less memory or faculty behind. His physical strength held out till he reached Burma, 'which I annexed,' and which he had earnestly desired to see. But when it failed, the change was sudden and complete. The journey was curtailed, and in the last days of 1894 he reached England as weak and helpless in mind and body as a little child. For a month, at his mother's house, he lingered pitifully, until very early in the morning of January 24 the numbing fingers of paralysis laid that weary brain to rest.

The illness of Lord Randolph Churchill had been followed with attention throughout the country, and the tragic termination of his career evoked greater manifestations of sympathy than are accorded to many who have played a longer part in the world's affairs. Politicians of all ranks and parties attended the service in Westminster Abbey. Large crowds assembled in the streets through which the funeral procession passed. The journey lay, by a strange coincidence, from Paddington to Woodstock. The London terminus was thronged with representatives of the Metropolitan constituency. Woodstock gathered around the churchyard at Bladon. Thither, too, came deputations of the Birmingham Tories

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ÆT. 4

and Irish friends. Over the landscape, brilliant with sunshine, snow had spread a glittering pall. He lies close by the tower of the village church, and the plain granite cross which marks the spot, can almost be discerned, across a mile of lawn and meadow, from the great house which was his childhood's home, and whose sinister motto his varied fortunes had not ill-sustained. A statue is erected to his memory in Blenheim Chapel; and a bust by the same hand was set up in the House of Commons by private subscription among the members, and unveiled with a few simple and well-chosen words by his oldest and truest political comrade, Sir Michael Hicks-Beach.

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The story of Lord Randolph Churchill's life is complete in itself and needs no comment from the teller. That he was a great elemental force in British politics, that he was broken irrecoverably at the moment of maturity, should be evident from these pages. It is idle to speculate upon what his work and fortunes might have been, had he continued to lead the House of Commons and influence against its inclinations the Conservative party. It is certain only that the course of domestic policy in Finance, in Temperance and other social questions would have been widely deflected from that which has been in fact pursued. Most of all, perhaps, was Ireland a loser by his downfall; for more than any

1895 Æt. 46 other Unionist of authority he understood the Irish people—their pride, their wants, their failings, their true inspiration. What would have happened to him, aye, and to others had he lived the ordinary span of men—after all, he was but forty-six—are questionings even more shadowy and unreal. How would he have regarded a naval and military expenditure of seventy millions in time of peace? What would he have thought of the later developments of those Imperialistic ideas, the rise of which he had powerfully, yet almost unconsciously, aided? What action would have been wrung from him by the stresses of the South African war? Would he, under the many riddles the future had reserved for such as he, have snapped the tie of sentiment that bound him to his party, resolved at last to 'shake the yoke of inauspicious stars'; or would he by combining its Protectionist appetites with the gathering forces of labour have endeavoured to repeat as a Tory-Socialist in the new century the triumphs of the Tory-Democrat in the old?

For all its sense of incompleteness, of tragic interruption, his life presents a harmony and unity of purpose and view. Verbal consistency is of small value. Yet even his verbal consistency was not especially open to challenge. But the 'climate of opinion' in which he lived, the mood and intention with which he faced the swiftly changing problems of a stormy period, were never sensibly or erratically altered. The principles and convictions which he developed in the Parliament of 1874, and professed during the Parliament of 1880, were those which guided him to the end. That the period was brief in which he swayed and almost dominated the Conservative party is not wonderful. The marvel is that he should ever have won to power in it at all. Only the peculiar conditions of the Parliament of 1880, in the House of Commons and out of doors, made his career, as I have described it, a possibility, and enabled him to attack a Liberal Government for oppression and war and to appeal to a Conservative party in the name of Peace, Retrenchment and Reform. Tory Democracy was necessarily a compromise (perilously near a paradox in the eye of a partisan) between widely different forces and ideas: ancient permanent institutions becoming the instruments of far-reaching social reforms: order conjoined with liberty; stability and yet progress; the Tory party and daring legislation! Yet narrow as was the path along which he moved, multitudes began to follow. Illogical and unsymmetrical as the idea might seem—an idea not even novel—it grew vital and true at his touch. At a time when Liberal formulas and Tory inertia seemed alike chill and comfortless, he warmed the heart of England and strangely stirred the imagination of her people.

He contained in his nature and in his policy all the elements necessary to ruin and success. If the principles he championed from 1880 to 1885 were the cause of his rise, they were also the cause of his fall.

1895 ÆT. 46 All his pledges he faithfully fulfilled. The Government changed. The vast preponderance of power in the State passed from one great party to the other. Lord Randolph Churchill remained exactly the same. He thought and said the same sort of things about foreign and domestic policy, about armaments and expenditure, about Ireland, about Egypt, while he was a Minister as he had done before. He continued to repeat them after he had left office for ever. The hopes he had raised among the people, the promises he had made, the great support and honour he had received from them, seemed to require of him strenuous exertions. And when all exertions had failed, he paid cheerfully the fullest and the only forfeit in his power.

Lord Randolph Churchill's name will not be recorded upon the bead-roll of either party. The Conservatives, whose forces he so greatly strengthened, the Liberals, some of whose finest principles he notably sustained, must equally regard his life and work with mingled feelings. A politician's character and position are measured in his day by party standards. When he is dead, all that he achieved in the name of party, is at an end. The eulogies and censures of partisans are powerless to affect his ultimate reputation. The scales wherein he was weighed are broken. The years to come bring weights and measures of their own.

There is an England which stretches far beyond the well-drilled masses who are assembled by party

machinery to salute with appropriate acclamation the 1895
utterances of their recognised fuglemen; an England ÆT. 46
of wise men who gaze without self-deception at the failings and follies of both political parties; of brave and earnest men who find in neither faction fair scope for the effort that is in them; of 'poor men' who increasingly doubt the sincerity of party philanthropy. It was to that England that Lord Randolph Churchill appealed; it was that England he so nearly won; it is by that England he will be justly judged.

APPENDICES

V

TWO ELECTION ADDRESSES

1886

To the Electors of South Paddington.

Gentlemen,—A ‘people's dissolution’ has come upon us. Such is the title given by Mr. Gladstone to the most wanton political convulsion which has, in our time, afflicted our country. The caprice of an individual is elevated to the dignity of an act of the people by the boundless egoism of the Prime Minister. The United Kingdom is to be disunited for the purpose of securing in office, if only for a little while, by the aid of a disloyal faction subsisting on foreign gold, a Government deserted by all who could confer upon it character or reputation.

Mr. Gladstone has reserved for his closing days a conspiracy against the honour of Britain and the welfare of Ireland more startlingly base and nefarious than any of those other numerous designs and plots which, during the last quarter of a century, have occupied his imagination. Nor are the results of the repeal of the Union, whatever they may be, a matter of moment to him. No practical responsibility for those results will fall upon his shoulders. He regards with the utmost unconcern, or with inconceivable frivolity, the fact that upon those who come after him will devolve the impossible labour of rebuilding a shattered empire, of re-uniting a divided kingdom. Let a credulous electorate give him, for the third time, a Parliamentary majority by the aid of which another Irish revolution may be consummated, and this most moderate of Ministers will be satisfied, will complacently retire to that repose for which he tells us 'nature cries aloud.' Nature, to whose cries he has for so long turned a stone-deaf ear.

This design for the separation of Ireland from Britain, this insane recurrence to heptarchical arrangements, this trafficking with treason, this condonation of crime, this exaltation of the disloyal, this abasement of the loyal, this desertion of our Protestant co-religionists, this monstrous mixture of imbecility, extravagance and political hysterics, better known as 'the Bill for the future Government of Ireland,' is furnished by its author with the most splendid attributes and clothed in the loftiest language. (1) Under its operation a nation of slaves paying tribute is to be filled with exuberant love for Britain which it now hates, but with which it is now on a footing of perfect political equality. (2) Persons who have subsisted and flourished on the effects of crime and outrage are to be immediately transformed into governors wise, moral and humane. (3) A peasantry which has for years exhibited a marked disinclination to pay contract rents to many landlords will instantly commence and for the next fifty years continue with cheerful alacrity and fidelity to pay rent to one single landlord; that landlord, moreover, assuming the garb of a foreign and alien Government. (4) A people without manufactures, longing for protection by which to create and foster manufactures, are to become in a moment ardent converts to the blessings of free trade. (5) A Parliament, in which any and every legislative project or deliberative proceeding or executive act, may be vetoed for three years, is to abound in rapid legislation, and to surpass our ancient historic Parliament in efficiency of procedure. (6) A financial system, under which by no possibility can revenue be adequate to expenditure, is to perform prodigies of economy and 'to scatter plenty o'er a smiling land.' (7) A pauper population is to roll in riches. (8) Law and order and rights of property are immediately to take their place as the most sacred and cherished institutions of a country a great portion of whose people hitherto, from time immemorial, have regarded them only to deride them and violate them, &c. &c.

The united and concentrated genius of Bedlam and Colney Hatch would strive in vain to produce a more striking tissue of absurdities.

Yet this is the policy, the last specific for Ireland, which is gravely recommended by senile vanity to the favourable consideration of a people renowned for common sense, the possessors of an Empire erected and preserved by the constant flow of common sense and, I doubt not, the progenitors of a posterity equally powerful, equally courageous and equally wise.

For the sake of this fifth message of peace to Ireland, this farrago of superlative nonsense, the vexatious and costly machinery of a general election is to be put in motion, all business other than what may be connected with political agitation, is to be impeded and suspended; trade and commercial enterprise, now suffering sadly from protracted bad times, and which political stability can alone re-invigorate, are to be further harassed and handicapped; all useful and desired reforms are to be indefinitely postponed, the British Constitution is to be torn up, the Liberal party shivered into fragments.

And why? For this reason and no other: To gratify the ambition of an old man in a hurry.

How long, gentlemen, will you and your brother electors tolerate this one-man power?

Since 1868, when this one-man power began to show itself in an acute form, have you enjoyed domestic security or foreign credit?

From that time to the present day, Ireland has been a struggling victim in Mr. Gladstone's hands. The Irish Church, a great agency for moral, social, and religious order, has been swept away; two special confiscations of landed property were confidently recommended to, and accepted by, Parliament as certain to produce peace; six coercion Acts of the most stringent character Mr. Gladstone has obtained; and all to no purpose. Confusion has become worse confounded; the fabric of Government in Ireland has been shattered; lawlessness and disorder have been triumphant and supreme; the present state of Ireland is one of 'grave disease,' says Mr. John Morley; and the blame is cast by Mr. Gladstone on the system, on the Constitution, on the Union.

It would be as reasonable to cast the blame upon the Equator.

The blame for this disgrace cannot be cast upon the system or upon the Constitution or upon the Union.

The blame must be borne by the man who has been Minister and who is Minister now.

Under the baneful insecurity which is inseparably connected with his name, your trade has gone from bad to worse, your Parliament has become demoralised, your foreign credit shaken, your colonies alienated, your Indian Empire imperilled.

Naturally enough, Ireland has suffered most of all, for Ireland, of all the Queen's dominions, was least able to stand a strain.

What frightful and irreparable Imperial catastrophe is necessary to tear the British people from the influence of this fetish, this idol, this superstition, which has brought upon them and upon the Irish unnumbered woes?

The negotiator of the 'Alabama' arbitration, the hero of the Transvaal surrender, the perpetrator of the bombardment of Alexandria, the decimator of the struggling Soudan tribes, the betrayer of Khartoum, the person guilty of the death of Gordon, the patentee of the Penjdeh shame, now stands before the country all alone, rejected by a democratic House of Commons.

No longer can he conceal his personality under the shelter of the Liberal party. One hundred members of that party in Parliament, representing thousands of electors, refused, in spite of all manner of blandishments, deceits and menaces, to support his Irish measure. All his colleagues have abandoned him. From the Duke of Argyll to Mr. Bright, from Lord Hartington to Mr. Chamberlain, one by one he has shed them all; none is near him of his former colleagues save certain placemen unworthy of notice. Last, but not least, the leading lights of Nonconformity, such as Dr. Dale and Mr. Spurgeon, hitherto the pillars of the Liberal party, stand aloof in utter dismay.

Known to the country under various 'aliases'—'the People's William,' 'the Grand Old Man,' 'the old Parliamentary hand,' now, in the part of 'the Grand electioneering agent,' he demands a vote of confidence from the constituencies.

Confidence in what?

In the Liberal party? No! The Liberal party, as we knew it, exists no longer. In his Irish project? No! It is dead; to be resuscitated or not, either wholly or in part, just as may suit the personal convenience of the author. In his Government? No! They are a mere collection of 'items,' whom he does not condescend to consult. In himself? Yes!

This is the latest and most perilous innovation into our constitutional practices. A pure unadulterated personal *plébiscite*, that is the demand; a political expedient borrowed from the last and worst days of the Second Empire.

Gentlemen, it is time that some one should speak out. I have written to you plainly, some may think strongly; but whatever the English vocabulary may contain of plainness and strength is inadequate to describe truly and to paint realistically the present political situation.

At this moment, so critical, we have not got to deal with a Government, or a party, or a policy. We have to deal with a man; with a man who makes the most unparalleled claim for dictatorial power which can be conceived by free men. It is for that reason that I deliberately addressed myself to the personal aspects of the question, and that

I have drawn the character of the claimant from recent history, and from facts well within the recollection of all.

Mr. Gladstone in his speech in Edinburgh on Friday recommended himself to the country in the name of Almighty God.

Others cannot and will not emulate such audacious profanity; but I do dare, in soliciting a renewal of your confidence, to recommend the policy of the Unionist party to you in the name of our common country, our great Empire, upon whose unity and effective maintenance so largely depend the freedom, the happiness and the progress of mankind.

I am, Gentlemen, yours obediently,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

Committee Room, 26 London Street, Paddington,
June 19, 1886.

1892.

To the Electors of South Paddington.

Gentlemen,—A General Election is immediately before us. I desire again to solicit the honour of representing South Paddington in the House of Commons. It is pleasant to me to record my strong appreciation of, and my abiding gratitude for, the kindness and indulgence which you have consistently shown me and for the large measure of confidence which during six years you have accorded me. I most earnestly trust that as long as I have the good fortune to take part in public life the connection between us may remain as close and strong as it has ever been at any former time.

My opinions on the policy of Home Rule for Ireland are unaltered and unalterable. The impracticability and futility of such a policy become more apparent and glaring as discussion and argument proceed. The insanity of a scheme to create an independent Parliament in an island inhabited by two races controlled by two religious creeds separated from each other by an impassable abyss; the insoluble problem raised by such a scheme as to the representation or non-representation of Ireland in the British Parliament; the impossibility of guaranteeing effectually, under any such scheme, justice to the Protestant minority, mainly residing in Ulster; the endless and bitter conflicts which must arise again, as they arose before, between the Irish and British Parliaments, in addition to those which must surely arise between Irish and British Administrations; the constitutional impossibility of establishing any tribunal to pronounce authoritatively on the validity of laws passed by either Parliament; the certain divergence of commercial and financial policy to be followed by Ireland and Great Britain respectively; all this Himalayan range of obstacles appears more utterly insuperable the closer it is looked at, the more attentively it is studied. A conclusive proof of the truth of these propositions is afforded by the impenetrable reserve maintained by Mr. Gladstone and by all his colleagues even as to the general form and outline of their Home Rule legislative project. The formula which I have more than once expressed, that it is impossible to put Home Rule into a Bill, is more rooted than ever in my mind; and even if the Party of Repeal were to be furnished with ever so great a majority at the coming General Election, that party is, I am convinced, condemned to political impotence and sterility so long as they continue to exhaust their energies in solving the insoluble, in accomplishing the impossible.

After six years of trial and labour the Unionist Party return to the country with a record of work and action cleaner and less open to serious attack than any other political party which I have known or read of in modern times. Ireland, on which country the last General Election turned, which was pronounced by our opponents to be ungovernable by the Parliament of the United Kingdom, is now simply and easily governed. Ireland was agitated in 1886; it is calm in 1892. Ireland was distressed in 1886; it is prosperous in 1892. No real grievance now oppresses and irritates the Irish peasant, nor can persons possessing reason and experience doubt that the energies and sense of a new Parliament, if this Parliament is swayed by a Unionist majority, will be employed in constructing a scheme of Local Government for the Irish people so broad and generous that the last vestiges of difference, inequality, inferiority (if such there still be), between Ireland and Great Britain will be swept away.

Facts like these, written so largely on the history of the past six years, cannot fail to strike and to arouse the common-sense of the British people as a whole; they must serve to dissipate the factious fury of baffled opponents, to neutralise the allurements of innumerable reckless and irredeemable promises. British electors at the present moment are in duty bound to draw largely on their memories and to make a very practical use of their experience. They cannot afford to forget or to neglect the lessons they learnt from the anxious and even terrible times which Ireland passed through during Mr. Gladstone's former administration. Remembering how gloomy and hopeless was the outlook, how frantic were the popular rage and passion which during all those years distracted and paralysed Ireland, how impotent were the measures of Mr. Gladstone's Government either to pacify or control; looking at Ireland now, tranquil, materially prosperous, crime (ordinary and extraordinary) reduced to an unprecedented minimum, the British electors must be compelled to realise that an invaluable period, rarely in history brighter, more full of justified hope and confidence, has at length, after infinite difficulty, been attained, and that even to run the risk of recurrence to former evils and perils would be an act of national folly difficult to characterise, ominous of Imperial ruin. I do not doubt but that South Paddington, in common with all other constituencies where knowledge and political study extensively prevail, will pronounce without hesitation in favour of the wisdom of the Unionist policy, of the continuance in power of the Unionist Party.

My views as to the reforms in the public service which public safety and economy alike urgently call for, are, I think, well known to you; they have undergone no change, save that I hold them more strongly than ever. You are also, I imagine, not unaware of my desire to meet with all legitimate sympathy and good-will the newly-formed but very articulate and well-defined demands of the labouring classes.

Thus recording my political faith, I trust that you may be willing and satisfied to dispose of your political confidence as you have done in former years since South Paddington became a separate borough, and that I may be enabled again to serve in Parliament our constituency and the country.

I have the honour to be
Your obedient servant,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

2 Connaught Place, W.: June 21, 1892.

VI

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE.

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL'S LETTER TO MR. SPEAKER AND HIS CORRESPONDENCE WITH MR. GLADSTONE IN 1886.

Lord Randolph Churchill to the Speaker.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: Nov. 30, 1886.

Dear Mr. Speaker,—I venture to submit to you for your information and consideration, the result of the deliberations of the Committee of the Cabinet on the question of Parliamentary Procedure.

It would be of the greatest possible advantage to me if I could have the honour of an interview with you, in order to examine and explain more fully than I could do by letter the effect and object of the various rules proposed. In case you should be coming to town before the 22nd or 23rd December and would make an appointment with me, I would be happy to wait upon you at any time or place which would be most convenient to you.

Two of the proposed new provisions especially concern the Chair:

1. The Closure of debate. (Rule No. 1.)
2. Motions for adjournment of the House at question time. (Rule No. 6.)

On the first these have been my views: The length of debate is essentially a question of 'order.' The Chair is the only judge of 'order.' By the present rule an unfair responsibility is thrown upon the Chair, in that the initiative with regard to Closure is thrown upon it, which initiative has to undergo the ordeal of a vote of the House. It is difficult and almost impracticable for the Chair to possess the information with regard to the proper time for the exercise of the initiative, without which action in the direction of Closure would be unsafe.

The Government propose to give the initiative of any Closure motion to the House, and a veto to the Chair with respect to receiving and putting such a motion. The Chair, under this provision, is not only the protector of fair and orderly debate (its chief function), but also guards against abuse of the Closure rule from motives of frivolity, obstruction, haste or tyranny. Nor can the decisions of the Chair be questioned or overruled, for no question is put to the House unless with the permission of the Chair.

Further, in the event of the House agreeing to the proposal, the association of the Chair with the exercise of the closing power will have been, for a second time, deliberately affirmed. This is a far better and more durable protection for minorities than any arrangement of numbers. An extreme and violent Government in office, supported by a powerful majority, would very soon make short work of any protective arrangement of proportionate majorities which might prove embarrassing to them. It would be a much more difficult matter to dissociate and exclude the Chair from all connection with, or control over, the Closure after that Parliament had on two occasions laid down a contrary principle.

Speaking generally, this Closure (as per enclosed) is aimed at persistent, deliberate, wilful obstruction. The Speaker can at any time permit an appeal to the House by a member, or a Minister, as to whether such obstruction is or is not being resorted to. This Closure is also designed to facilitate and render possible earlier hours of session and prevent unnecessary, stupid and perverse 'talking out.'

In respect of Rule 6 (adjournment of House at question time): After much anxious consideration I see no alternative to total abolition of the power of moving such adjournment, except the method proposed in the paper—of making the Chair the judge whether the subject to be discussed on adjournment motion is of such cardinal importance as to justify the postponement of the regular assigned business of the day. I imagine that the expression 'urgent matter of definite public importance' would receive, under the new arrangement, a strict and proper interpretation, and regard this matter, as the former one, as primarily a question of 'order.'

Please excuse this lengthy letter, and
Believe me to remain
Yours respectfully and faithfully,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

The Right Hon. the Speaker.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Mr. Gladstone.

Confidential.

Treasury Chambers, Whitehall, S.W.: December 17, 1886.

Dear Sir,—By the desire of the First Lord of the Treasury I have the honour to submit to you, for your information and convenience, the draft of the alterations in the procedure of the House of Commons which it is the intention of Her Majesty's Government to recommend to the consideration of the House next session.

I express the feelings of the Government when I assure you that in the event of its being within your power, and in accordance with your wishes, to offer any criticism or comment or suggestion on these draft proposals prior to the meeting of Parliament, such would be received and considered by the Government with every respect and attention.

I may add that in the opinion of the Government the House of Commons would do well to arrive at conclusions as to the reforms of procedure before commencing the regular business of the session; that it is with that object that

Parliament has been summoned so early in the year; and that the Government, as at present advised, will press this course upon the House of Commons.

I have the honour to be
Your faithful servant,
RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

The Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone, M.P.

Mr. Gladstone to Lord Randolph Churchill.

Confidential. Hawarden Castle, Chester: December 18, '86.

My dear Lord,—I have to thank you for your courtesy in apprising me at this early date of the particulars in which the Government propose to amend the procedure of the House of Commons and of their intention to give precedence to the subject.

In the last stages of this important matter, that of the present year, I had but a minor concern, and I will therefore at once communicate with Sir W. Harcourt, who represented principally the late Administration on the Committee. The matter will remain strictly confidential, and will not go beyond those of my late colleagues who were specially concerned. In the meantime I do not trouble you with any observations, but I thank you for your obliging readiness to consider any suggestion which I may tender to you.

I remain
Faithfully yours,
W. E. GLADSTONE.

Right Hon. the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

VII

POLITICAL LETTERS OF LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

1884–1893.

Freedom of Contract.

Mr. Moore Bayley to Lord Randolph Churchill.

57 Colmore Row, Birmingham: March 22, 1884.

My Lord,—I am a Conservative and an elector of the borough of Birmingham, and as such hope at no distant period to render your lordship, as a Conservative candidate for this borough, whatever political service lies in my power.

But before committing myself further in the compact that arose when you were accepted as such Conservative candidate I should like to know, as would a considerable number of political friends, how much further your lordship's views on the rights of contract proceed in the direction expressed in your speech in the House of Commons when you supported the second reading of Mr. Broadhurst's Leaseholders (Facilities of Purchase of Fee Simple) Bill.

The enactments of the present Government have in many particulars so violated the rights of contract between subject and subject that I am sure your lordship will not consider my request for information unreasonable as to the extent you are willing to commit your supporters in the furtherance of such like principles.

I remain
Yours obediently,
J. Moore Bayley.

Lord Randolph Churchill to Mr. Moore Bayley.

2 Connaught Place, W.: March 24, 1884.

Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 22nd inst. In answer to your question as to my views on the rights of contract I beg to inform you that where it can be clearly shown that genuine freedom of contract exists I am quite averse to State interference, so long as the contract in question may be either moral or legal. I will never, however, be a party to wrong and injustice, however much the banner of freedom of contract may be waved for the purpose of scaring those who may wish to bring relief. The good of the State, in my opinion, stands far above freedom of contract; and when these two forces clash, the latter will have to submit. If you will study the course of legislation during the last fifty years, you will find that the Tory party have interfered with and restricted quite as largely freedom of contract as the Liberals have done. With respect to the two leading instances of interference with freedom of contract during the present Parliament, viz. the Irish Land Act and the Agricultural Holdings Act, the Duke of Richmond's Agricultural Commission and the House of Lords must divide the responsibility for this legislation with Mr. Gladstone's Government. The latter had it in their power to reject this legislation, and did not do so; the former laid down the principles on which it was founded.

In comparison with legislation of that kind the compulsory conversion of long leaseholds into freeholds in towns, full and ample compensation being paid to the freeholder, is, as I called it in my speech in the House of Commons, 'a trifling matter.'

You will find the principle of this measure advocated in the *British Quarterly Review* five years ago (a very orthodox organ of Tory doctrine). You will find the principle again contained in the 65th section of the Conveyancing Law and

Properties Act, passed by Lord Cairns in 1881. I may also add that Lord Cairns dealt a very severe blow at the rights of owners of freehold property when he gave to the courts of law power to protect leaseholders from forfeiture for breaches of covenant.

Under all these circumstances I am inclined to think that you will agree with me that all this outcry against the supporters of Mr. Broadhurst's Bill—this gabble about Socialism, Communism, and Mr. George, &c.—is highly inconsistent and ridiculous, and betrays a prevalence of very deplorable and shocking ignorance as to the extent to which the rights of property can be tolerated, and the relation of the State thereto.

I remain
Yours faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

Lord Randolph Churchill on Temperance.

Private. 2 Connaught Place, W.: November 29, 1888.

My dear Sir,—I am extremely obliged to you for your interesting letter, with a great deal of the contents of which I am disposed to concur.

I think it would not be difficult to find a good many Conservatives willing to make a considerable step towards a restrictive regulation of the sale of alcoholic liquor.

The party with which you are connected ought, however, in my opinion, to consider practically the question of compensation in some form or other to the retail trader. I exclude compensation to the brewers and distillers as an impracticable and impossible demand. The retail trader stands on a very different footing, and any glaring injustice towards him would alienate many who would otherwise join the Temperance movement.

One good result of buying up retail liquor interests by charges on the rates would be to give a permanence to any local decision in favour of largely diminishing the number of or even abolishing public-houses.

The community would be most indisposed, by any reversal of its Temperance policy, to run the risk of having again to face fresh compensation liabilities.

Caprice in popular decisions is a danger to be guarded against.

I shall continue from time to time to urge the importance of strong dealing with the Licensing Question. I only trust that your party will not take up the position of 'everything or nothing,' but, if good proposals are made, will accept them—reserving to themselves, of course, the right to continue their agitation for more.

We shall, however, not effect much against the publicans unless we act vigorously in the direction of better houses for the poor. As long as we allow such an immense portion of our population to live in pigsties, the warmth and false cheerfulness of the public-house will be largely sought after.

The two questions appear to me to be inseparable.

I shall always be very glad to talk over these matters with you should you feel disposed for conference.

I am
Yours very faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

James Whyte, Esq.,
United Kingdom Alliance,

Lord Randolph Churchill on Home Rule.

2 Connaught Place, W.: February 10, 1891.

Dear Sir,—I beg to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 4th inst.

I am not at all surprised to learn that you, in common with, I expect, the overwhelming majority of members of the English Home Rule party, find yourself puzzled, embarrassed and anxious in consequence of the recent very interesting disturbance of the harmony of the Irish Home Rule party.

I have always been of opinion that, however attractive Home Rule for Ireland might be in theory, it was an absolute impossibility to put Home Rule into a Bill. You might just as well try to square the circle.

The dispute between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell as to what took place at what you call 'the notorious interview at Hawarden' brings out this fact with exceeeding clearness; and if you, and those who agree with you politically, insist upon shutting your eyes rather than contemplate a disagreeable truth, it will, I fear, be the sad fate of your party to waste years of time and strength in fruitless efforts to arrive at a solution of the hopeless problem 'How to put Home Rule into a Bill.'

You ask me, in conclusion, for my opinion as to what would be the best policy for Ireland.

In reply I would refer you to several speeches which I have delivered and letters which I have written in recent years, in which I have declared my conviction that in a large, liberal, generous and courageous development of Local Government in Ireland on lines similar to those which have been so successfully followed in this country and in Scotland, will be found the best and the only prospect of political tranquillity for the Irish people.

I am
Yours faithfully,
Randolph S. Churchill.

John Ogilvy, Esq.

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50 Grosvenor Square, W.: March 19, 1893.

My dear Sir,—In accordance with your wishes I write a few lines to you for the County Longford Meeting which is to be held to-morrow.

It is a pleasure to me to offer my congratulations to the Unionists of Longford on the energy and courage which they display in publicly demonstrating, among a population apparently hostile, their firm and tried attachment to the Parliamentary Union between Ireland and Great Britain and their determination to resist all efforts to sever that Union.

I used in the foregoing sentence the word 'apparently,' for indeed I do not believe that the bulk of the farmers and peasant farmers of Ireland are by any means confident as to the blessings which are to flow from Home Rule. I hear from many quarters, some of them of great authority, that there is arising and spreading in the minds of the Irish agricultural population an anxious doubt as to what will be their position under an Irish Parliament and whether the taxes which that Parliament will be forced to levy on income or on land, will not be far more onerous and exhausting than the rents they formerly paid to the landlords.

They will remember and reflect that under an Irish Parliament not only will they be absolutely cut off, in times of difficulty and of depression and of failure of crops, from all the sources of relief which from the Imperial Parliament they can now confidently draw upon and be assisted by; but they will be in the hands of a Government which, from sheer financial exigencies, will be compelled to treat the Irish taxpayer with the utmost rigour and harshness, to lay upon him imposts heavier than he can bear, and to exact relentlessly the payment of those imposts to the last farthing and on the earliest day that they become due.

I think you may well impress upon the farmers and peasant farmers the perfect security of property which they now enjoy under the protection of the Imperial Parliament; the perfect freedom which they possess from oppression of any kind, either from heavy taxation or from the unjust exactions of a pauper Government and Parliament; the great advantages in respect of their rentals secured to them by the Imperial Parliament and the great facilities afforded for the easy purchase of their freeholds by its liberality, which opportunities under the Home Rule Parliament will, from the squalid poverty of its resources, become illusory and insecure and in time absorbed by the hopeless insolvency of the Irish Government.

These are the great truths and facts which the loyal minority in Irish counties can urge upon the farmers and the peasantry. The Irish people, in respect of their material interests, have always been bright and quick-witted; they will, with their ready imagination, quickly discern that though it may be pleasant and profitable to be represented in the Imperial Parliament by an independent and numerically powerful party who can extract from the British Exchequer and legislature no inconsiderable concessions to Irish wants, necessities and demands, it will be a widely different state of things when they (the Irish agricultural population) are handed over, body and soul, tied and bound and without appeal, to the uncontrolled domination of that 'separate and independent' party who—untrained in the art of just and economical government, eager to enjoy at any cost, and even only for a brief period, the profits of office and the delights of a reckless exercise of patronage and power—will have given over to their insatiable appetites the lives and properties of those who now exist and flourish, in tolerable prosperity and in perfect safety, by the cultivation of the Irish soil.

I have always been opposed to what is called 'Home Rule' more upon the grounds that to the Irish people themselves it must bring distress, poverty, misery and ruin, than on account of the dangers it will entail upon the British Empire, though those dangers are exceedingly great.

I trust that you may be able to continue with ardour and success the patriotic and excellent work among the Irish people which you inaugurate to-morrow; you may be sure that the full sympathy and genuine support of a vast majority of the English people will attend you in the struggle and you may be confident that the dark and menacing thundercloud that now impends over your country, almost turning

Irish day into night, will soon be dissipated by the brightness of a recurring dawn of a new era of peace and prosperity for Ireland under the enlightened rule of a United Imperial Parliament.

Believe me to be
Most faithfully yours,
Randolph S. Churchill

J. M. Wilson, Esq.

VIII

MR. JENNINGS' ACCOUNT OF HIS QUARREL WITH LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

March, 1890.

Mr. Jennings' Memorandum.

On Friday, the 7th of March, I called upon Lord Randolph Churchill, to tell him my opinions with regard to the Resolution proposed by the Government on the Report of the Special Commission. I told him I thought some express reference should be made in the Resolution to the emphatic acquittal of Mr. Parnell and his colleagues on what I called the 'murder charges,' and gave him my reasons. With these reasons he seemed to be much impressed, and after talking the matter over he urged me *not* to speak upon the main question, as I intended, but to embody my ideas in an Amendment, for then the Speaker could call upon me and I should have a recognised place in the debate. Otherwise I might not be called upon at all, and have no chance of speaking. I said that if any Amendment were drawn up, it should be in the most moderate terms, so that it might avoid the faults and disadvantages of Mr. Gladstone's on the same subject. He then went to his table and drew up the Amendment, saying, when he handed it to me, 'I think no one can object to this—there is not a single adjective in it.' We considered it well, and at one o'clock or so I left him, asking him to turn the subject well over in his mind before we met at the House and to let me know whether he was still in favour of the Amendment. At a little after three we met in the lobby, and he assured me that he was confident the Amendment was the right thing, and that he did not see how any reasonable objection could be made to it. I then went into the House, and after Questions gave notice of the Amendment.

On Saturday night I dined with Lord R. and a party at the Junior Carlton Club, but we did not have much conversation on the subject until the end of the evening, when Lord Justice FitzGibbon came up to us and condemned the Amendment. Lord R. then asked me to go to his house the next morning, and talk the matter over with 'Fitz.' I said that it was rather too late to 'talk it over' on the line taken up by FitzGibbon, for I was committed to the Amendment and intended to move it; that I should be very busy the next day, and would rather be excused going to his house. But Lord R. pressed me very earnestly to go and accordingly I did so.

On entering his room (Sunday, the 9th), FitzGibbon having been with him some time before, Lord R. said: 'I am sorry you put that Amendment down; it is a mistake; can't be defended.' I was astounded. 'But,' I said, 'it is your own Amendment.' 'Yes,' he said coolly: 'but I have changed my mind.' I was silent a minute or two, and then asked him to tell me why he had changed his mind. 'FitzGibbon has been talking it over with me,' he said, 'and I am sure he is right.' 'Then,' I said, 'I am sorry Lord Justice FitzGibbon was not here last Friday morning.' I listened to what FitzGibbon had to say—it had all been in the papers before—and as soon as I could, I left. I felt, however, much disheartened at hearing the author of the Amendment which I had been induced to move, denounce it as 'all a mistake.'

The next evening (Monday) Lord Randolph's brother-in-law (Lord Curzon) came to me as I was sitting in the House and said he had something important to say to me about the Amendment. We went outside into the corridor by the library, and there he told me that 'Randolph had made up his mind to stand altogether aloof from the

Amendment; he thought it would be best not to support it; he did not see his way clear to have anything to do with it'—with more to the same effect. I said: 'What will people think of him? He has himself told one of the newspaper correspondents that he intends to speak and vote for the Amendment.' 'Yes,' replied Lord Curzon, 'that is the nuisance of his talking to those correspondents.' I said: 'I know what *I* shall think of his behaviour—first Birmingham, and now *this*. You cannot doubt what my opinion will be.'

I should have mentioned that earlier in the day Lord R. C. had called me to his side in the smoking-room and said: 'I shall probably say something to-day on the main question, if I get a chance.' I did not quite see what he meant, and when afterwards he went away (at dinner-time) without speaking I thought he had meant nothing. Afterwards came Lord Curzon's message, just referred to. On the Tuesday, when the Amendment was to be moved, just as I was going into the House, Lord Curzon again came to me, and said, 'Randolph will not take any part in the debate unless you are attacked.' He added: 'I cannot support you.' I said but little, and went into the House, quite determined to go on.

The House was crowded, and just before Questions were over R. C. leaned back to me and said: 'I am going to speak on the main question.' I asked him 'When?' 'Now,' he said. 'How can you, after one Amendment has been voted on?' 'It is all right,' he said; 'I have arranged it with the Speaker.' There was no time for explanation or remonstrance. He was evidently quite determined, and in a few moments the Speaker called upon him.

He then delivered a violent diatribe against the Government, accusing them, in effect, of having called the forger Pigott into existence—'the bloody, rotten, ghastly fœtus, Pigott, Pigott, Pigott'—pointing with his finger at the Ministry each time he mentioned the name. He suggested the possibility of a Pigott being employed against himself. While he was speaking several friends who had intended to support me came to me and whispered that they could not be identified with so outrageous an attack upon the Ministry. 'You will be linked with it,' said several of them. 'Everybody will believe that the entire programme to-night was arranged between you.'

Smarting under the deliberate and treacherous manner in which I had been thrown over, and at the utter want of consideration shown by a leader for a follower placed *by* that leader in a very responsible and difficult position, I determined not to move the Amendment, and to tell the House why I adopted that course. When R. C. sat down I informed him that I should do this, and he made several attempts to dissuade me. I was quite resolved, however, and am glad that I was not induced to waver, although to throw up the Amendment was the sorest disappointment I have ever had; and—for the time, at any rate—the whole transaction has sickened me of political life.

L. J. J.

[I think it right to add to this memorandum the following note by Lord Justice FitzGibbon.—W. S. C.]

'Mr. Jennings' memorandum seems to me to give an unduly unfavourable impression of Lord Randolph's action. Lord Randolph told me that when Mr. Jennings first showed him the draft of the amendment he stated plainly that he wished to take the whole responsibility for it, and intended to move it whether Lord Randolph supported it or not. Afterwards, at Connaught Place, on the day before the debate, the whole subject was fully discussed by Lord Randolph, Jennings and myself, and the conversation ended in a distinct statement by Lord Randolph to Mr. Jennings that, on fuller consideration, he thought the amendment a mistake, and that although he would not vote against it, he could not speak in favour of it, but would speak upon the main question if he spoke at all. His speech was, in substance, an examination of the constitutional position which he had adopted, and a vindication of his action in warning the Unionist leaders, two years before, of the dangers and difficulties into which the Special Commission must lead them. When I read the report of his speech in the *Times*, it seemed to me that, but for the sudden loss of self-control indicated in the text, which, as much by manner as by actual words, made it appear to be a bitter attack upon the Government, it was conceived in a moderate tone. But, after what had happened on the previous morning, I cannot understand how Jennings could have imagined that there was a breach of faith with him.'

IX

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL'S MEMORANDUM ON ARMY AND NAVY ADMINISTRATION,

included in the Report of Lord Hartington's Commission, March 21, 1890.

The Royal Commission desires, I apprehend, to recommend to her Majesty's Ministers a system of government and management for the Army and the Navy which shall appear to secure the *maximum* of efficiency which can be reasonably expected from normal expenditure on those services. By the consent of all, under present arrangements, this *maximum* has not been attained.

The present system of administration of the services may be said to date, for the Army, from 1855, and for the Navy from some twenty-five years earlier. A Prime Minister forming a government allots to the different offices members of Parliament of prominence and supposed capacity. Thus it invariably happens that gentlemen are appointed to exercise supreme control over the Army and Navy who possess no experience or knowledge of the military or naval service and profession. They are expected to decide general and technical questions of naval and military policy, they are supposed to be held responsible for the consequences of their decisions, and after a tenure of office, sometimes of several months, sometimes of a few years, they are succeeded by other gentlemen who take their places, provided with a similar lack of experience and knowledge. The duties which these two Ministers are expected to discharge involve scientific and economical provision for the defensive and offensive power of an Empire whose possessions are scattered all over the world and whose subjects number over three hundred million souls.

It can hardly be a matter for surprise that such a system has not altogether approximated to a satisfactory standard of combined efficiency and economy. Governments and Parliaments have been untiring in their pursuit after reform, but have as yet only succeeded in progressively increasing public dissatisfaction and, simultaneously, burdens on the taxpayer. The question seems to present itself whether the time has not arrived for considering seriously and without prejudice the expediency of a very radical change in our system of naval and military administration. The object aimed at is the *maximum* of efficiency consistent with the amount of expenditure which the taxpayer or his representatives will tolerate. Can any practical amount of efficiency of administration be obtained without professional training and knowledge? Can it be obtained without direct personal responsibility? Can direct personal responsibility be reasonably expected without professional control? The answer to these questions, I submit, is obviously in the negative. Professional reputation to a soldier or a sailor is everything next to life itself and the loss of it equals professional ruin, entailing pecuniary and social loss of a heavy character. To the ordinary politician under our political system administrative miscarriage brings little or no evil consequences. His fate, if unfortunate or unskilful, is in the vast majority of cases to be transferred to some other office—to a foreign embassy, to a colonial governorship or, at the worst, to the House of Lords. Neither pecuniary nor social loss necessarily or ordinarily follows the unskilful and possibly the disastrous administration of our Ministers for the Army and Navy. More than this, the professional persons who advise respectively the Secretary of State for War and the First Lord of the Admiralty escape all risk of public censure, sheltered as they are by the fictitious responsibility of the civilian Minister. History and theory will be found to coincide in support of the recital set forth above.

Parliament is made the scapegoat for defective administration. The control of Parliament, the interference of Parliament, the jealousy of Parliament for its rights and privileges, these are the stock arguments in favour of an adherence to the main lines of our present system of naval and military administration.

Personally, and speaking with some experience of the House of Commons and after several years' close study of the House of Commons, I put aside arguments of that kind. I have arrived at the conclusion that, eliminating great party issues, the House of Commons, with respect to the transaction of ordinary public affairs, is an assembly mainly composed of businesslike and reasonable individuals who, having to find certain funds for certain purposes, desire, in the main, that the pecuniary demands of Government should not be obviously excessive and that fair guarantees should be given for economical expenditure of the funds provided.

With these views I advocate, as an improvement on present arrangements, that the administration of the Navy and the Army should be entrusted respectively to members of those professions. That naval training, naval experience and naval eminence should be the qualifications of our Minister of Marine. That military training, military experience and military eminence should be the qualifications for our Minister for the Army. Superficially, at any rate, this suggestion would seem to be reasonable and not out of accord with ordinary common sense. It may, however, be met with the objection that it is unsuited to our constitutional arrangements and incompatible with Parliamentary control. I doubt whether this objection will sustain vigorous examination. Parliament has to provide annually a certain number of millions sterling for the purposes of Imperial defence, and while Parliament is always willing and anxious, sometimes even over-anxious, to recognise and reward the public service of an individual, if at the same time under my proposed reform Parliament is enabled, without much difficulty, to do what it cannot do now and what it never has been able to do—namely, to detect and punish the maladministration of an individual—Parliament would probably be satisfied.

To this end I suggest that the offices actually in existence of Secretary of State for War and of the Board of Admiralty be abolished. In their place I propose that there should be created three new offices—

I. A Commander-in-Chief or Lord High Admiral of the Navy, having, subject to the Government, supreme control over and responsibility for naval administration. Naval training, naval experience and naval eminence being the qualification for this office.

II. A Commander-in-Chief or Captain-General of the Army, having, subject to the Government, supreme control over and responsibility for the administration of the Army. Military training, military experience and military eminence being the qualification for this office.

For the purpose of securing continuity of administration, and also of providing from time to time for fresh administrative energy, I propose that these two offices should be appointments tenable for five years ; also for the purpose of gaining for the Cabinet military and naval opinion at first hand, I recommend that the holders of these offices should be created privy councillors and should be summoned to all Cabinet Councils when military and naval questions are under consideration, with, while those naval and military questions are under consideration, an equal position with the other Cabinet Ministers. But in order to keep the administration of the services free from party politics I suggest that these two Ministers should take no part in the discussion or decision of any questions other than those connected with naval and military affairs.

[A close parallel with the suggestion set forth above may be found in the position on the Council of the Indian Viceroy of the Indian Commander-in-Chief.]

For the purpose of bringing these Ministers into immediate contact with Parliament and at the same time of keeping them free from being involved in daily party debates and divisions, I advocate that they should be created members of the House of Lords.

[The feasibility of this suggestion is, I think, to a large extent illustrated by the positions now held in the House of Lords by his Royal Highness the Duke of Cambridge and Lord Wolseley. Possibly also in former days similar positions were to some extent maintained, without inconvenience, by the Duke of Wellington and Lord Hardinge.]

These two Ministers would each of them be assisted by (among other officers) (1) a chief of the staff whose duties will be sketched below, and (2) a financial secretary, with a seat in the House of Commons, whose duty it would be to explain and, if necessary, to defend in that assembly naval or military administration in detail.

III. For the purpose of (1) preserving and insuring the financial control of Parliament and of the Government, of (2) supplying the much-needed link between the two services, so that one great object—viz., Imperial defence—should be more completely attained, I propose that there should be created the office of Secretary of State and Treasurer for the Sea and Land Forces of the Crown.

This Minister would, according to my view, settle with the responsible heads of the services the amount of annual expenditure to be submitted to the Cabinet; he would be charged with the duty of auditing the accounts of the Admiralty and the War Office, with presenting to and defending in Parliament those estimates and that expenditure. He would be charged, further, with a third great duty—viz., with the control, management of, and responsibility for, the Ordnance Department, and with the making of the great contracts for the Army and the Navy. He would, as it were, set up and carry on a great shop from which the military and naval heads would procure most of the supplies which they needed.

The main outlines of expenditure having been agreed upon by the two professional Ministers in conjunction with the proposed Secretary of State, this latter would not interfere nor necessarily be held responsible for the administration of the services, excepting in so far as he might have undertaken to provide those services with ordnance and other supplies and in so far as his duty lay in auditing the accounts and in testing the stores in hand.

The Secretary of State as proposed would be assisted by (1) a Permanent Under-Secretary of State, (2) a Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, (3) an Accountant and Auditor-General, (4) a Controller of Ordnance and Supplies, under whom would be (*a*) the Head of the Ordnance Factories, (*b*) the Director of Contracts.

The control and interference now exercised by the Treasury over Army and Navy expenditure would, under the proposed scheme, cease and determine. So also would the audit of the Controller or Auditor-General. I suggest that the Secretary of State, or his Accountant and Auditor-General would personally explain to Parliament and to the Committee of Public Account, Army and Navy Expenditure.

The relations between the proposed Ministers for the Army and Navy on one hand, and the Government on the other, would be closely analogous to the well-understood relations which now exist between the Home Government and the Viceroy of India or the Ambassador at a Foreign Court or a Colonial Governor. The Ministers for the Army and Navy might be dismissed by a new Government coming into office, but such a dismissal would be a grave Ministerial action requiring defence and explanation in Parliament.

The relations between the Ministers for the Army and Navy and the Secretary of State for the Sea and Land Forces of the Crown would be those of perfect equality and constant communication. The heads of the Army and Navy would bring to the Secretary of State in very authoritative form the views of their respective professions. The Secretary of State would bring to the heads of the Army and Navy the views of the Government and the House of Commons on the political circumstances of the time. The three would examine in concert the general requirements of Imperial defence from a point of view embracing and balancing one against another all the exigencies or supposed exigencies of the services. Where the claims or the views of the Army and Navy might conflict, the Secretary of State would probably be found an authoritative and acceptable arbitrator. In the event of the Ministers for the Army and Navy disagreeing, either singly or jointly, with the Secretary of State, recourse would be had to the Cabinet. In the event of the Cabinet supporting the Secretary of State against the Ministers of the Army and Navy, either singly or jointly, those Ministers would have to consider whether their professional responsibility or reputation would admit of their continuing to hold office. In the event of the resignation of either or of both, Parliamentary discussion must ensue, and a Parliamentary decision must be taken. In the event of the administration of the heads of the Army and Navy being questioned by Parliament, the Secretary of State first, and the Government as a whole next, would have to consider whether they could or could not support in Parliament the administrative action arraigned. In either case, Parliamentary discussion and decision follow. Under the arrangements suggested above in almost every conceivable circumstance, I submit that not only in a very large measure (possibly as great as is practicable) is direct personal responsibility actually established, but also that the control of Parliament, far from being diminished, is considerably increased and made much more effective. The suggestions set forth above are, while probably open to much objection and criticism, also probably capable of much improvement and development, and in arriving at a judgment upon them, the Commissioners should bear in mind that the evidence before us discloses in many particulars a state of things more seriously unsatisfactory and possibly more pregnant with danger than Parliament or the public imagine; and the admitted defects of the present system of administration ought to be balanced by the Commissioners against the suggested defects of proposals for reform.

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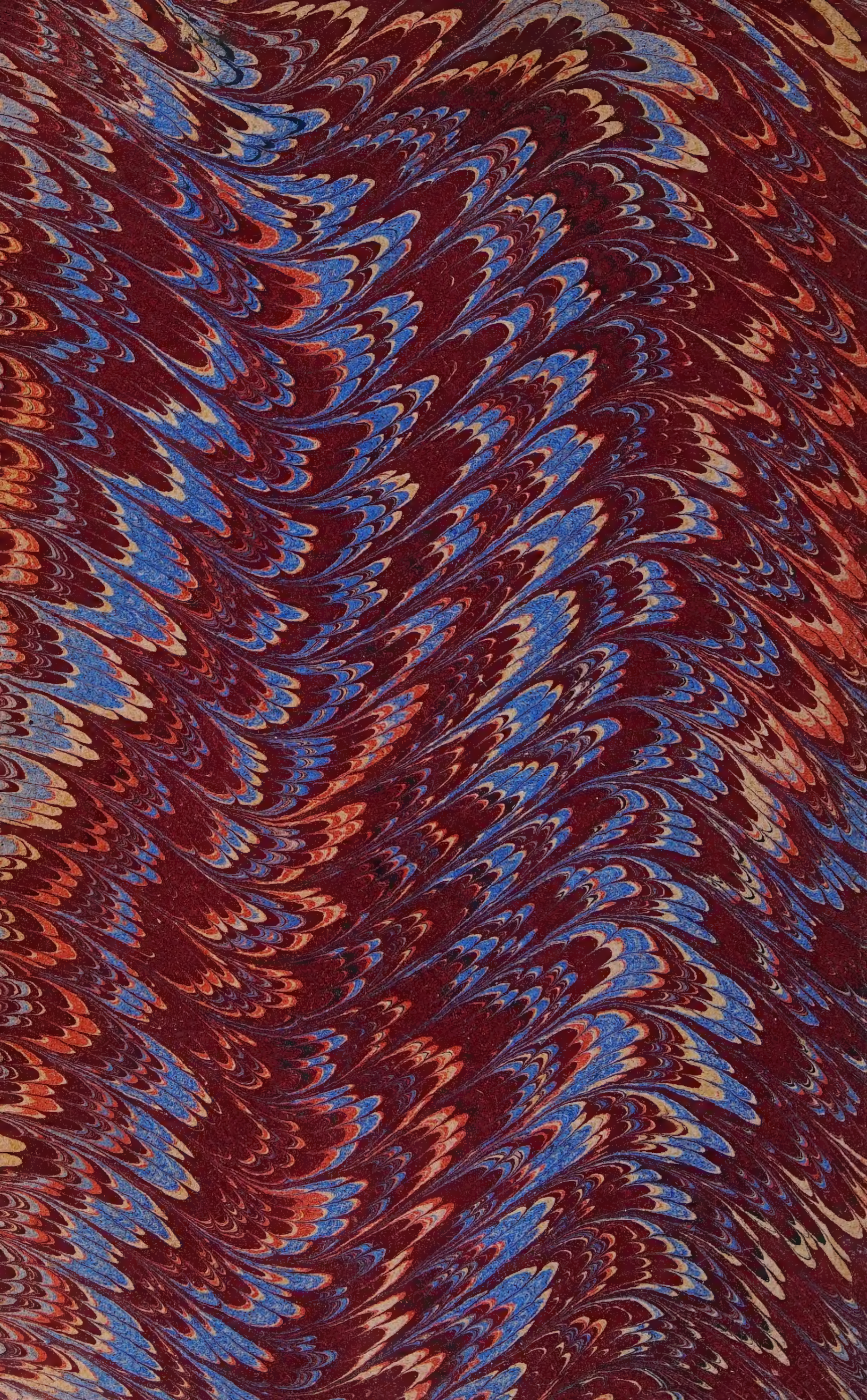

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